

EARLY EUROPEAN ACCOUNTS OF THE SIKHS

**Major James Browne
Father Jerome Xavier
John Surman & Edward Stephenson
Colonel A. L. H. Polier
Charles Wilkins
George Forster
John Griffiths
William Francklin**

Edited and Annotated by
Ganda Singh

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PREFACE

The *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs* by Major James Browne was originally published in 1788 and was reprinted for the first time in *Indian Studies : Past & Present*, Vol. II, No. 3 & 4. This reprint was edited and extensively annotated by Dr. Ganda Singh of Patiala. In Vol. III No. 2 of the *Journal*, another bunch of articles and extracts on the same subject by early European writers was published, as edited and annotated again by Dr. Singh. Along with Browne's work, the reprints of these papers are now being issued in a separate edition, and, as Dr. Ganda Singh intends, under the title of *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*. We hope this will serve as an important source-book for Sikh-history.

Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya
Editor, *Indian Studies : Past & Present*

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks* by Major James Browne is the first regular treatise on the Sikhs written by an Englishman. The whole of it is not, however, his original work. As he himself tells us in the *Introduction* and in the body of *Tract*, the greater part of it is the translation of the abridged Persian version of a Devnagri manuscript in the possession of two Hindus with whom he came into contact in 1783. When deputed to the court of Delhi, he had evidently been instructed by the Governor General of the East India Company at Calcutta, Mr. Warren Hastings, to collect every possible information about the then rising power of the Sikhs. They had then established themselves completely in the Panjab and their incursions carried them occasionally not only to the gates of Delhi but also to the territories of the Nawab Vizir of Oudh, a friend and ally of the East India Company. This not unoften caused considerable anxiety to the Governor General. As his personal agent, James Browne, therefore, 'took every opportunity to acquire a knowledge of the strength, resources, disposition, and constitution of the several states bordering on the provinces of Agra and Dehly, by seeking out and cultivating a personal intimacy with the best informed men on these several subjects. In the course of these researches,' he continues, 'the first and most important object which presented itself was the great irregular Aristocracy of the Sicks, a sect which, from a small beginning in the neighbourhood of Lahore, has established itself in the complete possession of all the country between the Attock and the Sutledge and levies contribution to the very frontier of the Vizir's dominions.' (*Int.* iii.)

'Having met,' he says, 'with two Hindoos of considerable knowledge, who were natives of Lahore where they had resided the greater part of their lives, and who had in their possession accounts of the rise and progress of the Sicks, written in the *Nuggery* (or common Hindoo) character, I persuaded them to let me have a translation of them in the Persian language, abridging it as much as they could do, without injuring the substantial purpose of information. ... This Persian sketch of an history, I have translated into English'. (*Int.*, iii. IV.)

This Persian manuscript was, no doubt, the *Risālā-i-Nānak Shāh* by Budh Singh Arora of Lahore written in collaboration with Lala Ajaib Singh Suraj of Maler (Kotla).

According to the colophon of the *Risālā dar Ahwāl-i-Nānak Shāh Darwesh* in the Aligarh Muslim University, Abdus-Salam Section, *Tarikh-i-Afghānān* No. 156/22, Budh Singh Arora Lahauri was a *Mulāzim*, a servant (evidently, a clerk) of James Browne. The Aligarh manuscripts dated 1197 Al-Hijri, 1783 A. D., appears to be one of the earliest copies like the one in the British Museum, London, No. Add. 26273.

The English translation was made by James Browne for the information of the Governor General, Warren Hastings. As the manuscript was found to be extremely defective and said nothing about the manners and customs of the Sikhs, Browne not only inserted in the *Introduction* all that he was able to discover on those subjects, but he also brought the narrative up to the date of translation, April 1785. To this he gave the title of *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*. The last thing referred to by him therein is the treaty entered into on March 31, 1785, between the Marathas represented by Ambjai Ingle and the *Khalsājī* by Sardar Baghel Singh and others. He obtained a copy of this treaty and submitted it on April 9, 1785, to Mr. John Macpherson, then acting as the Governor General. As he makes no mention of the Definitive Treaty between the same parties concluded on May 10, the English translation had evidently been made before that date. It may incidentally be mentioned here that these treaties between the Sikhs and the Marathas and the alliance of the Sikhs and the East India Company proposed in the month of May 1785 fell through and did not come to fruition.

James Browne was born about the year 1744 and joined the East India Company's army in 1765 as a cadet at the age of 21. He was commissioned as Ensign on November 10, 1765, became a lieutenant on May 2, 1767, and a captain on June 30, 1771. In 1772, he attracted the attention of Warren Hastings and was appointed his aide-de-camp. In that capacity his relations with Warren Hastings became cordial and he reposed full confidence in him. He was appointed collector of the Jungle Terai districts in 1774 and served there for six years. He also saw active service from 1777 with the 14th Battalion Sepoys (formerly 24th) in the Maratha wars in the Gohad district. On January 19, 1781, he was promoted to the rank of Major.

With the death of Najjaf Khan in April 1782, there arose a tussle for power at the Court of Emperor Shah Alam at Delhi. The Emperor was too weak a man to control the affairs of state. The struggle between the claimants for power (Mirza Shafi Khan, Afrasiab Khan, Najjaf Quli Khan and Muhammad Beg Hamadani) afforded an opportunity to the Sikhs, the Jats and the Marathas to try their hands at securing control of Delhi and the Emperor. This set Warren Hastings a thinking. He wished to be kept in touch with the political developments at the Mughal capital so that he could act in time to safeguard the interests of the East India Company and to restore the authority of the Emperor from whose ostensible bounty the Company derived its constitutional status in the country. He, therefore, decided in August 1782 to send an agent of his to the Imperial capital. Major James Browne was selected for the job.

Major James Browne was instructed by the Governor General, Warren Hastings, to first proceed to Lucknow and there to express to Nawab Vizir Asaf-ud-Daula his desire,

in consideration of the Nawab's letters, to assist him in the retrieval of the affairs of the king at Delhi, and to receive from the Nawab Vizir such commands as he may give and to consider and execute them as the Governor General's.

At Delhi, he was, on behalf of the Governor General, "simply to assure the King of the attachment of the Company, my Principal, to his person and Interest . . . and to afford him such substantial proofs of it as the state of our affairs will admit, . . . my sole objects are to manifest to the world at this particular time, the attachment of the Company and of the English Nation to promote his Interests and to know in what manner we may effect it." (Hastings to Browne, August 20, 1782; *Browne Corresp.*, No. 1, pp. 1-5.)

He was also asked not to take any active part in politics or to ally himself with any particular party.

Emperor Shah Ālam, referred to as King above, then needed a stable Government at the capital, and for protection of his dominions from the incursions of the Sikhs and, the Marathas.

While at Lucknow, where he arrived on November 1, 1792, or a day or two earlier, Browne was persuaded by Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah to help his relative Shafi Khan continue in power at Delhi. He had been appointed minister by the Emperor in September 1782 and had acquired supremacy at Delhi with the help of Muhammad Beg Hamadani. Arrived at the capital, Browne became an active supporter of Shafi Khan and recommended to Warren Hastings to come personally to the capital along with Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah at the head of their troops to form an anti-Sikh alliance. He even contemplated inviting the Marathas against the Sikhs, but Shafi Khan succeeded in dissuading him from this project, and, to gain his point, 'convinced him that the Maratha leader was perhaps an even greater danger to British dominion than the [Sikh] marauders from the north'. Browne repeatedly pressed upon the attention of Hastings the advisability of a military alliance with Shafi Khan. Hastings, however, no longer trusted the political sagacity of his agent and felt that he was not acting in accordance with, and within the limits of, the instructions issued to him.

In the month of August 1783, Browne changed sides and became a supporter of Afrasiab Khan instead of Shafi Khan as the former offered to enter into an alliance and sign treaty with the English and 'to assign lands for the payment of nine or ten battalions to be stationed near Delhi'. The murder of Shafi by Muhammad Beg Hamadani on September 23, 1783, cleared the way for Afrasiab Khan. Browne saw the Emperor at Delhi on February 5, 1784, and learnt of his Majesty's financial hardship. Afrasiab at this time said that if the Company failed to support him, he would be driven to the only alternative of joining the Marathas. The situation, however, became complicated with the flight of Prince Jawan Bakht to Lucknow in April 1784. Hastings was then there. He felt favourably inclined towards the Prince and was prepared to send him to Delhi with English troops, provided he was granted pardon and restored to favour. He was even prepared, in that case, to send troops to defend the Emperor's interests provided they were on no account used against Mahadji Sindhia.

Mahadji Sindhia now appeared on the scene and offered to have the prince restored to his position. Afrasiab meekly submitted to the Maratha leader and joined his camp in October 1784. But he was murdered on November 2 by Shafi's brother Zain-ul-Abidin. Mahadji Sindhia then assumed control of Delhi and acted as Regent and Commander-in-chief, having been appointed *Vakil-i-Mutlaq* by the Emperor on December 1-3, 1784. During this period James Browne acted in a manner prejudicial to Mahadji Sindhia and not in conformity with the policy and wishes of his masters.

Warren Hastings left India in February 1785, and his successor, Sir John Macpherson, recalled Browne on March 1, 1785. He was then no longer needed there, as James Anderson was already there with the Maratha camp. Thus ended the mission of James Browne to the Imperial Court at Delhi, and he left for Calcutta on May 12, 1785.

Major James Browne turned out to be no good a diplomat. He could not take a detached view of things and was easily carried away by his emotions. As a man of strong likes and dislikes, he could be easily influenced to take sides. As a diplomat and an Agent of the Governor General, he was to represent the views of his masters and remain obedient to, and within the limits of, the instructions that had been given to him at the time of his appointment, or issued from time to time. This he did not do, with the result that, at times, he acted at variance with the policy of his principals. Evidently he was not a good judge of men and things and did not have a sufficiently keen eye for discernment. He could not rightly understand and interpret the intentions and policy of his government, and unnecessarily landed them in awkward positions. From the very beginning he entered into party politics of Delhi. His taking sides at first with Shafi Khan and then lending undue support to Afrasiab Khan were wrong steps from diplomatic point of view. And his opposition to Mahadji Sindhia in face of the declared views and policy of the Governor General, Warren Hastings, does not appear to be very wise. His distrust of the Maratha leader was misplaced, while Warren Hastings, on the other hand, was right in trusting him. All this contributed to the failure of his mission.

(The mission of James Browne has been described at some length by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, in the *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, Vol. XIV. The *Browne Correspondence* published by the National Archives of India, Delhi, 1960, the *Calender of Persian Correspondence*, vols. V, VI and VII, and other relevant records preserved at the National Archives, read along with Saiyad Muhammad Husain's *Munashāt-i-Husainī* and Khair-ud-Din Allahabadi's *Ibrat Nāmāh*, give practically a complete picture of the mission. For other supplementary material, the inquisitive reader is referred to the bibliography appended to the *Browne's Correspondence*, pp. 349-52.)

Major James Browne, however, was not satisfied with his recall. He left for England early in 1786. He nursed a grievance against Sir John Macpherson, the successor of Warren Hastings, for the aspersions that his government had cast upon him. On Macpherson's arrival in England, therefore, Browne called upon him to apologize in public. This, Sir John refused to do. Browne thereupon, challenged him to a duel which was fought at Hyde Park, London, in September 1787. Both escaped unhurt.

While Browne was in England, he submitted on September 17, 1787, to Mr. John Motteux, the Chairman of the Honourable Court of Director for the Affairs of the Honourable United East India Company, in response to his wish, a copy of his *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, which the Chairman was pleased to order to be printed along with his *Description of the Jungle Terry Districts*, submitted to him earlier on June 20. These two *Tracts* were published in London in 1788 under the common title of *India Tracts*. According to the editor of the *Browne Correspondence*, "these *Tracts* have proved of great value to later historians and form perhaps the only beneficial consequence of his stay at Shah Ālam's court". (*Introduction*, xii.)

Browne was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel on February 2, 1788, and he returned to India. He married at Calcutta on December 16, 1789, Miss Catherine Charlotte Raper, to whom was born their only son, James Edward Browne.

Major James Browne died at Dinapore on June 22, 1792 at the age of 48.

As we have seen above, James Browne had a literary bent of mind and was interested in Persian and Hindustani literature. He acquired proficiency in both of these languages and employed talented men of letters as his *munshis* or clerks. The names of Budh Singh Arora, Muhammad Salah-ud-Din, Saiyad Muhammad Husain and Muhammad Saleh Qudrat deserve special mention.

Budh Singh Arora of Lahore, as mentioned above, was the author of *Risālā-i-Nānak Shāh* which had been based on a Devnagri manuscript history of the Sikhs. Lala Ajaib Singh Suraj of Maler (Kotla) was a collaborator of Budh Singh in this work. It was this *Risālā* that became the basis of Browne's *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*.

Muhammad Salah-ud-Din was the brother of Muhammad Khair-ud-Din Allahabadi, the *munshi* of Mr. Anderson, the British Resident at the Camp of Mahadji Sindhia. On the recommendation of Major William Palmer, the British Resident at the court of Nawab Vizir Asaf-ud-Daulah of Oudh in 1782, James Browne employed Salah -ud-Din as his *munshi* and *vakil*. Like his brother, the author of *Ibrat Nāmāh*, he had facile pen and was a master of the art of writing. None of his writings has so far come to light. After the recall of James Browne in 1785, Salah-ud-Din entered the service of James Anderson and was employed by him to attend on the Mughal emperor on his part. But as both the brothers, Khair-ud-din and Salah-ud-Din, were found to be 'in intrigue with Mahadji Sindhia and the Mughal Court behind the Resident's back, they were dismissed from the Company's service in 1786'. (*Browne's Corresp.*, 291; *CPC*, vii, Nos. 487, 498.)

Saiyad Muhammad Husain seems to have been in the service of James Browne in 1197-98 A. H., 1783-84, and his *Munashāt-i-Husainī* is a collection of letters of *Muin-ud-Daulah*, Major James Browne addressed to Emperor Shah Ālam, Nobles and Grandees of the Empire, 1197-98. (*Browne Corresp.*, 349.)

In the colophon of his *Tārikh-i-Āli*, Muhammad Saleh Qudrat tells us that he had written it at the express desire (*hasab-i-farmāish*) of James Browne. The manuscript preserved in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, Patna, bears the

date 18th December, 1785, and is transcribed in the hand of Saiyad Muhammed Husain, *munshi* of James Browne.

Munshi Jān-i-Ālam *Shirin-ragam* translated into Persian for his master of a Hindi manuscript history of the Kachhwaha Rajas. James Browne had obtained this work from Jaipur in 1198 A. H. (1783-84 A. D.) and its translation was completed by Jān-i-Ālam at Agra in Shawwal 1198 A.H. (August-September 1784) under the title of *Banswali-i-buzurgān-i-Mahārājādhirāj Sawāī Partāp Singh Bahādur* from their origin to 1198 A. H. (1783-84). [*Br. Mus. Rieu*, i, 301 a.]

The National Archives of India has, under the editorship of its Director, Shri K. D. Bhargava, published the entire correspondence of Major James Browne connected with his mission to the Court at Delhi, 1782-85. There was a considerable lacuna in the volume of correspondence available at the National Archives. This has been filled by copies obtained from the Commonwealth Relations Office, London. In its present form it will be of immense value not only to the students of general Indian history, but also to those of the Maratha and Sikh history, with particular reference to their efforts at expansion towards the Mughal capital and its neighbourhood. Incidentally, it throws a flood of light on the Maratha-Sikh relations during this period resulting in the treaties of March 31 and May 10, 1785, referred to above.

According to the editor of the *Browne Correspondence*, the *India Tracts* 'besides giving accounts of the revenue and trade of the Jungle Terai Districts and of the rise of the Sikh power, assembled much material from Persian manuscripts which Browne had come across while on his mission. These *Tracts*', he continues, 'have proved of great value to later historians'. The second Tract, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*, in particular, has been considerably relied upon and extensively used by historians like John Malcolm, W. L. M' Gregor and Joseph D. Cunningham. And the result has not been very happy. Many a mistake of the Persian manuscript translated by Browne have come to be repeated. It is true that with the passage of time this work has practically disappeared and is now extremely rare, difficult to be found even in some of the largest libraries of India and abroad. Yet it is there, and its age lends to it a certain amount of historical glory and authenticity which unfortunately does not otherwise belong to it. And this is, in truth, my only apology of reprinting it in its present edited form.'

It first attracted my notice in March 1928 through an article entitled *Sikh Itihās* by Sardar Karam Singh, published in the Phagan-Chetra 1984-85 (Bk.) issue of the *Phulwāri*. Therein on page 425, col. 2, the learned historian mentioned it under No. 3 of his bibliographical study of the Sikhs and said : 'This is the earliest book which contains a regular account of the Sikhs. I have done my best but I have not been able to get at this book so far. It should be available in the library of the Sikhs'. Luckily, I was able to secure a copy of it from a bookseller in London in February 1932. Ever since then I have been thinking of publishing an annotated edition of it, correcting the various factual mistakes and wrongful statements that had crept into it through the original Persian manuscript. The historical knowledge of the authors of the *Risālā-i-Nānak Shāh*

was very poor indeed, and Major Browne had evidently not the leisure and facilities to check it up with more reliable authorities. There are no serious mistakes in Browne's postscript and *Introduction*, which are mostly based on his own first-hand knowledge and personal observations. Here and there, of course, one comes across reflections of his own prejudices. But they are natural to the circumstances in which he lived, and are negligible.

The corrections of mistakes and clarifications of doubtful points have all been made in the footnotes. I have not followed the new system of giving the footnotes at the end, adopted only for the facility of printers. As in this case the footnotes do not immediately attract the attention of the reader; they are likely not to be referred to at all. Thus they lose their usefulness and defeat the purpose for which they are added. I have, therefore, adopted the old and more useful method of giving the footnotes at the bottom of the pages containing the indicating numbers. No changes whatever, have been made in the body of the text. The old spellings, capital letters, etc., have been allowed to stand as they were.

Those of the readers to whom the word *Sikh* spelt as *Sick* looks queer would be interested to know that it has been spelt in as many as twenty-two different ways in old books and records, e. g.,

Seck— Jean Law de Lauriston, *Memoiré*, (1913), p. 508.

Seeck—Griffith to Adams; Major Palmer to G. G., 13-2-1785.

Seek— Polier, P. C. Gupta, *Introduction*.

Seick— Griffith to Adams.

Seik— IRD For. Deptt. Secret Index, 1783, LR 23-11-1783, Cons. 3-3-1784.

Seikh— *Triumphal Recep. of Seikh Guns*, Picture; Forrest, *A Picturesque Tour*. 87-89, 91, 115, etc.

Seyque—Jean Law de Lauriston, *Memoiré*.

Shik— Bengal Newspapers, etc.

Shikh— Bengal Newspapers, etc.

Sic— Forrest, *Selec. Hastings' Memoir*, 59.

Sic'hs— Wilkins, Chas.

Sick— Browne, James.

Sicke— Mouton, *Rapport*.

Sicque—Forster, George, *Travels*.

Siek— IRD Records.

Siekh— IRD Records.

Sik— Scot, J. Trans. *Memoirs of Eradat Kh.*, p. 58.

Sike— Bristow, 24-1-1783, For. Deptt. Sec. Cons., 3-3-1783.

Sikh— Common.

Sique— Polier, *Slques.*

Syc— Raymond, *Seir Mutagherin.*

Syck— Raymond, *Seir Mutagherin.*

Patiala,
April 30, 1960

Gonda Singh

HISTORY OF
THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS
OF THE SIKHS

by
Major James Browne
of the Honble East India Company's service
1788

Edited and Annotated by
GANDA SINGH, M. A., Ph. D.
Patiala

History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs

To JOHN MOTTEUX, Esq. Chairman of the Honorable Court of Directors, for the Affairs of the Honourable United East India Company.

SIR,

CONFORMABLY to the wish which you were pleased to express, that I should furnish you with an account of the rise and present state of the tribe of people called Sicks, I now beg leave to submit to your perusal, the following translation which I have made, of a Persian manuscript, written by my desire while I resided at the court of Dehly, to which I have added all the information which I have by other channels acquired, respecting that people; and I have accompanied the whole with a map, specifying the extent of their territories, the names of their chiefs, together with the places of their respective residence, and the number of their forces. I shall be very happy if this tract is thought in any degree worthy of your attention and beg leave to subscribe myself, with great truth and respect.

Your most obliged humble servant,
JAMES BROWNE.

HARLEY STREET,
Sept. 17, 1787.

INTRODUCTION

DURING the time of my residence as the English Minister at the Court of His Majesty Shah Alum, I took every opportunity to acquire a knowledge of the strength, resources, disposition, the constitution of the several States bordering on the provinces of Agra and Dehly, by seeking out, and cultivating a personal intimacy with the best informed men on those several subjects. In the course of these researches, the first and most important object which presented itself was the great irregular Aristocracy of the Sicks, a sect, which from a small beginning in the neighbourhood of Lahore, has established itself in the complete possession of all the country between the Attock and Sutledge, and levies contributions to the very frontier of the Vizier's dominions.

Having met with two Hindcos¹ of considerable knowledge, who were natives of Lahore, where they had resided the greater part of their lives, and who had in their possession, accounts of the rise and progress of the Sicks, written in the Nuggary² (or common Hindoo) character, I persuaded them to let me have a translation of one of them in the Persian language, abridging it as much as they could do, without injuring the essential purpose of information. After all, I found it extremely defective in a regular continuation of dates, and therefore not deserving the name of a history; however, the dates of the principal events are clearly determined; future opportunities and greater leisure, than I possessed while at Dehly, may ascertain those which are at present unknown. This Persian sketch of an history I have translated into English, and now beg leave to offer it to my honourable masters, as I am persuaded that the rapid progress of this sect will hereafter render a knowledge of them, their strength, and government, very important to the administration of Bengal. But as in the Persian manuscript very little is said of the manners and customs of the Sicks, I shall insert in this introduction all that I have been able to discover on those heads.

The people known by the name of Sicks, were originally the common inhabitants of the provinces of Lahore and Multan, and mostly of the *Jaut* tribe; the doctrine on which their sect is founded was introduced by *Gooroo Nanak*, about two hundred and fifty³ years ago, and appears to bear that kind of relation to the Hindoo religion, which

1. James Browne does not mention the names of those two Hindu gentlemen. There is no doubt, however, that they were Budh Singh Arora of Lahore, the author of the *Risala-i-Nanak Shah*, and Lala Ajaib Singh of Maler (Kotla), his collaborator. According to the colophon of this treatise, it was written at the instance of Major James Browne in 1197 A. H., 1783. (British Museum, London, Pers. Ms. Add. 26273; also Aligarh Muslim University Abdus-Salam Section *Tarikh-i-Afghan* No. 156/22.)

2. Nagri, Devnagri or Sanskrit characters.

3. Should be 'about three hundred years'. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion was born in 1469 A. D. (1526 Bikrami), and he commenced his preachings at the age of about twenty.

the Protestant does to the Romish,⁴ retaining all the essential principles, but being abridged of most of its ceremonies, as well as of the subordinate objects of veneration. At first, the sect was merely speculative, quiet, inoffensive, and unarmed ; they were first persecuted by the barbarous bigotry of Aurungzebe⁵ ; and persecution, as will ever be the case, gave strength to that which it meant to destroy ; the Sicks from necessity confederated together, and finding that their peaceable deportment did not secure them from oppression, they took up arms to defend themselves against a tyrannical government; and as will always happen where the common rights of humanity are violated, a hero⁶ arose, whose courage and ability directed the efforts of his injured followers, to a just, though severe revenge. As the progress of these events is related in the history, I shall only say at present that as the Mogul government declined, the Sicks in spite of repeated attempts to suppress them, continued to acquire strength. They made the distinction of their sect a political as much as a religious principle, rendering the admission into it easy to all, and the immediate temporal advantages of protection and independence, as great and as evident as possible ; while they at the same time levied contributions upon all their neighbours who refused to come into their fraternity.

As to their government, it is aristocratical, but very irregular and imperfect, for the body of the people is divided under a number of chiefs, who possess portions of country, either by former right as Zemindars, or by usurpation. These chiefs enjoy distinct authority in their respective districts, uncontrolled by any superior power ; and only assemble together on particular occasions for the purposes of depredation, or of defence ; when in a tumultuous Diet,⁷ they choose by majority of votes, a leader to command their joint forces during the expedition ; generally from among those chiefs

4. According to the Sikhs, their religion *does not* ‘bear that kind of relation to the Hindu religion which the Protestant does to the Romish’. The opinion of Miss Dorothy Field in her *The Religion of the Sikhs* on this point may be quoted here for the information of the readers.

“The word Hinduism is undoubtedly capable of a wide application, but it is questionable whether it should be held to include the Sikhs in view of the fact that the pure teachings of the Gurus assumed a critical attitude towards the three cardinal pillars of Hinduism, the priesthood, the caste system and the Vedas. A reading of the *Granth* strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate religion, rather than a reformed sect of the Hindus.” (Page 10.)

5. Persecution of the Sikhs began in the first year of Emperor Jehangir’s reign, when Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru, was tortured to death for propagation of his faith. (See Memoirs of Jehangir : the *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri*, Nawal Kishore edition, 35.)

6. The ‘hero’ referred to here is Banda Singh Bahadur who was converted and baptized into the Sikh faith by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Guru, at Nander in the Deccan a few days before his death on 6-7th October, 1708. For a detailed account of this hero, see Ganda Singh’s *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur*.

7. A conference or a religio-political meeting.

whose Zemindaries are most considerable ; his authority is however but ill obeyed by so many other chiefs, who though possessed of smaller territories, yet as leaders of the fraternity of Sicks, think themselves perfectly his equals, and barely allow him, during his temporary elevation, the dignity of *Primus inter Pares*.

About thirty years ago, one Jessa Sing Kelal, a chief of considerable weight and abilities, having been chosen commander of their grand army, when it expelled the Aumils of Ahmed Shah Durrany from the city, and Subah of Lahore, became so popular that he ventured to strike rupees at the mint of Lahore in his own name, with an inscription in Persian to this effect, 'Jessa Kelal "conquered the country of Ahmed,"' and struck this "coin by the grace of God ;" ⁸ but after they had been current about fifteen years,

8. The inscription on the coin is said to have been :

But in reality no such coin was issued by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (called 'Kalal' on account of the Distillers' profession of his ancestors). When the Sikhs occupied Lahore and established a short-lived *Bādshāhat*, with Jassa Singh as *Bādshāh*, the local Muslim officials and *mullahs* were very much perturbed. With a view to instigating and exciting the Afghan invader, Ahmed Shah Durrani, against the Sikhs, they struck a few bars with the above inscription and sent them to Ahmed Shah [Ganesh Das Badehra, *Chahav Bagh-i-Panjah*]. He was already buring with rage on account of the severe blow dealt by Sikhs at his prestige in driving his son, Taimur, away from the Punjab. The insulting inscription had the desired effect and brought the infuriated invader in 1759 to wreak his vengeance and recover the province.

It may be mentioned that a Sikh feels insulted if addressed without the surname of *Singh*. It cannot, therefore, be believed that a man like Jassa Singh could have inscribed his half name on a coin issued by himself, and that too with the word *Kalal*, which even a poor professional distiller would not tolerate to have it added to his name. Moreover, a Sikh seldom claims any credit to himself. He does every thing in the name of the Guru, as testified by the Sikh coins issued by the Sikh *missaldars* in 1764. They bore the following inscription :

'Kettle (the symbol of the means to feed the poor), Sword (the symbol of the power to

the grand Diet of the Sick chiefs, (called *Goormutta*) ⁹ determined to call in all those rupees and to strike them in the names of *Gooroo Nanack* and *Gooroo Gobind Sing*, the first and the last of their Gooroos, or religious leaders, the latter of whom directed them to take up arms against the Mussulmans, and rendered general a kind of feast to be celebrated at the grand Diet, or *Goormatta*, at which feast they use large dishes called in Persian *Daig*, which I mention to explain the Persian inscription¹⁰ used on their coin from that time, which is as follows, "Gooroo Gobind Singh, received from Nanack the *Daig*, the Sword, and rapid Victory".

The city of Lahore is at present divided among the three most powerful chiefs, who share the revenue arising from all imposts and duties, etc., within the city, including the mint ; the names of the present possessors are Gujer Sing, Subah Sing, and Laina Sing.

The Diets of the Sicks are held at the holy Tank (basin of water) of *Amrutsur*, about twenty coss north by east from Lahore,¹¹ which was appointed for the purpose by their Gooroo. Here, as I said before, the commander for the campaign is chosen, and their expeditions for the season planned.

The plunder collected during these expeditions is divided among the chiefs according to the number of their followers, to whom each chief makes his own distribution.

In the districts not reduced to their absolute subjection, but into which they make occasional incursions, they levy a tribute which they call *Raukey*, and which is about one fifth, (as the Marhatta Chout is one fourth) of the annual rent ; whenever a Zemindar has agreed to pay this tribute to any Sick chief, that chief not only himself refrains from plundering him, but will protect him from all others ; and this protection is by general consent held so far sacred, that even if the grand army passes through a Zemindary where the safe guards of the lowest Sick chief are stationed, it will not violate them.

Since the Sicks became powerful and confederated for the purpose of conquest,

protect the weak and helpless), Victory and Unhesitating Patronage have been obtained from Gurus Nanak-Govind Singh'. Even the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh would not issue a coin *in his own name*. He maintained the same old inscription of the Khalsa and called his coins *Nānakshāhi* or 'belonging to Emperor Nanak', the founder of the Sikh religion.

9. The word *Gurmata* has been erroneously interpreted as and applied to the grand meetings or councils of the Sikhs. In fact it means a resolution passed at such councils. *Matā* literally means opinion or resolution, and it is called *Gur-matā*, opinion or resolution endorsed by the Guru, because the Guru is believed to be always presiding over the deliberations of the Khalsa held in the presence of the Holy Book the *Guru Granth Sāhib*.

10. For the meaning of the Persian inscription, see No. 8 above.

11. The exact distance between Amritsar and Lahore is thirty two miles according to English measurement.

they have called their confederacy *Khalsa Gee*,¹² or the State, and their grand army *Dull Khalsa Gee*, or the Army of the State.¹³

As the extent of their possessions is clearly expressed in the accompanying map, as well as the names of their chiefs, and the number of their forces from the best authorities, I shall only observe that the country is said to be in a state of high cultivation which, I believe, because they carry into it all the cattle fit for tillage, which come into their possession by plunder, collect a very moderate rent, and that mostly in kind, and during any intestine disputes, their soldiery never molest the husbandman.

Trade however, is in a low state, owing to the insecurity of merchants going backwards and forwards through the territories of so many independent chiefs.

Of their manufactures, the principal are very fine cloth, which they make at Lahore, as also the best arms in Hindostan.

Their cavalry is remarkably good, the men being very hardy and well armed with sabres and excellent matchlocks, which they use with great dexterity ; the horses bred in their country are of one of the best breeds in the empire, owing to the use formerly made there of Arabian and Persian stallions, and something in the temperature of the air and water of that country. Most of these soldiers have two or three horses each, by which means their incursions are made with great rapidity, their armies marching from fifty to one hundred and twenty miles a day ; their dress is dark blue, as ordered by *Gooro Gobind*,¹⁴ and gives them, when collected in large bodies together, a very dismal appearance.

The chiefs are only distinguishable from their followers by finer horses and arms.

I have conversed with several Sicks who were sent to me by different chiefs on complimentary messages ; and I perceived a manly boldness in their manner and conversation, very unlike the other inhabitants of Hindostan, owning no doubt to the freedom of their government.

In their camps they use no tents, even the chiefs are sheltered by nothing more than small *Numgheras* (square canopies of coarse cotton cloth) supported on four slender poles—the common soldiers pitch a blanket on two sticks, and fasten the corners

12. The term *Khalsa ji* has a very wide application. It is used for the entire body of the Sikh nation, for a group of Sikhs and also for an individual Sikh.

13. *Dal Khalsa ji* means the Army of the Khalsa.

14. Guru Govind Singh never ordered his Sikhs to put on the dress of any particular colour. The zealous Nihangs however patronized the dark blue colour used by the Guru during his escape from Machhiwara. As the Nihangs exercised great influence in the community and occasionally led the expeditions of the Sikhs against their enemies, their dark blue dress acquired general popularity. Moreover, the dark blue dress appears to have been very convenient for the homeless Sikhs in those troubled days of the eighteenth century when moving columns of the Mughals scoured the land in search and pursuit of them, when they were not allowed to live in the towns, were caught and massacred in their villages and were hunted down like wild beasts in their hiding places in jungles and marshes.

down to the ground with wooden pins, so that they encamp or decamp in a few minutes.

Among their customs, the following are remarkable :

They will not use tobacco, though its use is universal to all the inhabitants of Hindostan, yet they drink spirits and smoke *Bhang*¹⁵ (the leaves of hemp) to the greatest excess of intoxication.

In admitting a proselyte, they make him drink Sherbet out of a large cup, with certain ceremonies, as will be seen hereafter, and which are designed to signify that every distinction is abolished,¹⁶ except that of being a Sick, even a Mussulman may become a Sick on these conditions. From the time that he is admitted into the fraternity, he wears a steel ring round one of his wrists, lets his hair and beard grow to full length,¹⁷ and calls on the name of Gooroo in confirmation of all engagements.

These are all the circumstances respecting this Sect, which are not specifically mentioned in the history, to which I will add, that a sect which contained in its original principles so much internal vigour, as sustained it against the bloody persecution of a great government, determined, and interested to suppress it, raised it up again with fresh strength on every opportunity which occurred, and at length enabled it so far to subdue all opposition, as to acquire an entire and undisturbed dominion over some of the finest provinces of the empire, from whence it makes incursions into others, holding out protection to all who join, and destruction to all who oppose it ; a sect, which makes religion and politics unite in its aggrandizement, and renders the entrance into it so easy

15. The use of intoxicants, of whatever kind, is strictly prohibited to the Sikhs. There are clear injunctions against them in the *Rahit Namahs*, the Books of Sikh conduct. It is really unfortunate that the use of *bhang* had become prevalent among the *Nihangs*. *Bhang* is, however, not smoked but drunk. Smoking is rigorously prohibited and leads to excommunication.

16. Sikhism strikes at the very root of the caste system and aims at the total abolition of every kind of distinction, whether of caste or creed, of high or low, or of rich or poor. Interdining, and that too from the same plate and cup at the time of admission into the Brotherhood of the Khalsa, is the first and the most important practical step in this direction. In the *Guru ka Langar* men and women of all castes and creeds, and of all religions and countries, are made to sit side by side in the same line and dine on a common floor.

17. From the time of his admission into the fraternity, every Khalsa is required to wear the following five symbols called the Five K's.

1. *Kesh*—the Hair ; never to shave head or beard or cut any hair whatever of the body.
2. *Kangha*—the comb.
3. *Kachh*—a pair of shorts, emblem of decency, purity and chastity.
4. *Kara*—an iron bangle, emblem of faithfulness and dutifulness.
5. *Kripaṇ*—a sword, symbol of power to defend the faith and to protect the weak and helpless.

to all who desire to become members of it, cannot fail to extend itself very far, and in the end to be exceedingly formidable to all its neighbours.

Respecting the map which accompanies this history, it was laid down from a Persian map of Punjab which I procured at Agra ; and was put into its present shape by Lieutenant James Nathaniel Rind, of the Bengal establishment, who commanded the escorte which accompanied me while resident at the Shah's court, and whom I must here beg leave to mention as a very deserving officer. The map, however, is designed principally as a political chart, to shew the extent of the dominions of the Sicks, and the places where the chiefs reside : on points of Geographical knowledge, I have too just an opinion of Major Rennell's abilities, to attempt an improvement on any work of his ; and I therefore give this explanation of the design of the accompanying map, that no other may be imputed to me.

History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks

A. H. 936 In the latter end of the reign of Sultan Baber,¹ *Nanuck Shah*, a Dervish, by A. D. 1529 tribe a *Ketteree*, lived in the village of Shoderah,² situated about seven crores (or coss) east of the river Chenab ; as he was a man of a most exemplary life, and eminent for his piety, charity, and abstinence, he became famous throughout Hindostan, and wherever he went teaching his doctrine, he made a great number of proselytes ; he wrote several books upon the nature and institutions of his order ; such as the *Purraun Sunkely*,³ etc., which he distributed for the regulation of the worship of his followers. He took the title of *Gooroo*, or religious Teacher, and called his followers in general *Sicks*, which signifies followers of a Sect, but his immediate disciples, whom he instructed in the mysteries of his doctrine, he called *Murids*, or Disciples ; these terms are often confounded, but they are properly very distinct.

A. H. 936 After the death of Gooroo Nanuck, his successors were in the following A. D. 1529 order :

1. Gooroo Ankud.⁴
2. Gooroo Amerdad.
3. Gooroo Ramdas.

1. It was not in the latter end of the reign of Sultan Babar (who reigned only for five years from 1526 to 1530) that Guru Nanak lived. The Guru was born in 1469, began his preachings at the age of about twenty and lived up to an advanced age of seventy, dying in the year 1539.

2. It was not in the village of Shoderah (Sohdara) that Guru Nanak lived. The Guru was born in the village, then known as Talwandi Rai Bhoi, now called Nanakana Sahib, 48 miles south-west of Lahore (Pakistan) on the Lahore-Shahdara-Chichoki Mallian-Shorkot railway line. His father Kalu (Kalyan Chand) was then employed here as a Patwari to Rai Bular, the Chief of this place.

3. The writings of Guru Nanak are embodied in the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*. The book *Pran-sangali* is said to have been composed by Guru Nanak during his visit to Ceylon. Guru Arjan deputed Bhai Paira to the King of Ceylon who, according to Macauliffe, 'received him with respect, treated him hospitably, and gave him the required volume, with a letter and many presents for the Guru and allowed him to depart on his return journey to Amritsar. The *Pran-sangali* was subsequently stolen by a pretended Sadhu, or holyman'. 'A printed *Pran-sangali* on the science of *Jog* can now be purchased but the Sikhs do not accept it as genuine', continues the same author. (*Sikh Religion* i. 156, iii. 53-5 ; Santokh Singh, *Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, etc.

4. The order of the successors of Guru Nanak is as follows and not as given in the text :—

4. Gooroo Arjun who wrote ⁵ the *Gurhant*, now generally followed as the rule of discipline.

5. Gooroo Ramroy. ⁶

6. Gooroo Hur Roy.

7. Gooroo Hurry Siri Kirshen, these Goroos appear upon an average to have exercised their office about twenty-two years each.

A. H. 1073. In the year of the Hegira, 1073, Aurungzebe being on the throne, a son A. D. 1662. was borne to Gooroo Hurry Siri Kirshen, to whom they gave the name of

Taigh Behader,⁷ when this son came to the age of puberty,— being remarkable for his piety and abstinence,—his followers conceived a superstitious veneration for him, and used among themselves, to call him *the true King* ⁸; he on his part, whatever he received in presents, or offerings from his disciples, or the Sicks in general, he laid out in provisions, which he publicly distributed to all who chose to receive them ; this brought great numbers to participate of his bounty.

A. H. 1073. The news writers of Lahore, soon transmitted an account of these circumstances

A. D. 1662. to Aurungzebe, who was then engaged in the war of the Deckan ; and his Majesty being very particular in his examination of all persons who pretended

1. Guru Nanak (1469-1539)
2. Guru Angad (1539-1552)
3. Guru Amar Das (1552-1574)
4. Guru Ram Das (1574-1581)
5. Guru Arjun (1581-1606)
6. Guru Hargobind (1606-1645)
7. Guru Har Rai (1645-1661)
8. Guru Har Kishen (1661-1664)
9. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675)
10. Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708).

5. Guru Arjun did not write the whole of the *Granth* himself. He collected the writings of his predecessors from Guru Nanak to Guru Ram Das, and suitable compositions of Hindu and Muslim Saints into a volume and, with the addition of his own writings, compiled the work leaving a few pages blank later on used for the writings of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur. The Scripture was, however, proclaimed as the *Guru* of the Sikhs, by the tenth Guru Govind Singh at the time of his death in 1708.

6. The name 'Romroy' has been erroneously included in the order of the Gurus in place of Guru Hargobind.

7. Guru Tegh Bahadur was not the son of Gooroo Hurry Siri Kirshen (Guru Har Kishan), but he was the son of Guru Hargobind and was born on Baisakh Vadi 5, 1678 Bikrami, April 1, 1621.

8. The title *Sacha Padshah*, *The True King*, was at first used by the Sikhs for Guru Hargovind, the Sixth Guru (Muhsin Fani's *Dabistan Mazahib*, 233).

to extraordinary sanctity, he sent some *Yessawils* (Ushers) to bring Taigh Behader to his presence, who on their arrival at the place of his residence, immediately set out with them, and soon arrived the court.

A. H. 1096. Aurungzebe having called him into his presence, examined him very strictly
A. D. 1684. respecting the revelations and miracles to which he supposed that he pretended ; to which Taigh Behader replied, "that he was a Dervish ; that he subsisted on the alms of the charitable, and passed his life in the contemplation and adoration of God ; but that he neither pretended to revelations nor miracles". The Shah again said, "they call you the *True King*, and Taigh Behader (which was a military title), what presumption is this?"—to which Taigh Behader replied, "whatever is, is from God ; Dervishes have nothing to do with titles or honours". The Shah preceiving that he could discover nothing of the revelations or miracles attributed to this Dervish, gave orders for putting him to death immediately.

At that time, a Bramin of the name of Murdaneh,⁹ who stood by, said to Taigh Behader, "If you will give me permission, I will imprecate curses on these persecutors, and by the justice of God, you shall see them instantly destroyed". But Taigh Behader, according to the counsel given to him at parting by his father¹⁰ to preserve the secret of the sect, though it should cost him his life, replied, "The time is not yet come, God himself will punish them, and raise up a hero, who will exact ample vengeance for my blood".

He was accordingly put to death (A) and upon the spot where he suffered Martyrdom, a monument¹¹ has been erected, which is still in being, and offerings are made at it.

Note A. Aurungzebe seems on this, as well as on many other occasions, to have made religion a veil to cover his political tyranny ; the real motive of this cruelty to Taigh Behader was, most probably, resentment for his having allowed his followers to call him *The True King* ; and his having used a military title, which was not granted by Royal Patent, agreeably to the customs of that Government, of all which he was exceeding jealous.

9. Guru Tegh Bahadur's companion in the jail at Delhi was Bhai Mati Das and not Murdaneh. For the conversation between Mati Das and Guru Tegh Bahadur, and the detailed account of the former's martyrdom, the reader is referred to Bhai Santokh Singh's *Suraj Prakash* (edited by Bhai Vir Singh), Vol. XI. p. 4430-34, and Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, IV. 381-82

10. No 'counsel' had been given to Guru Tegh Bahadur 'at parting by his father' Hargovind who had died in March 1644 about thirtytwo years before November 1675 when the ninth Guru was executed in Delhi.

11. The monument raised upon the spot where the Guru suffered martyrdom is called Gurdwara Sisganj, and it still stands near the Kotwali in the Chandani Chowk at Delhi between the fort and the Fatehpuri Mosque.

A. H. 1116. Soon after this, the widow of Taigh Behader, having been left with child, A. D. 1704. was delivered of a son, to whom they gave the name of *Gobind Sing*, ¹² who growing up, and being about twenty years of age, conceived an ardent desire to revenge ¹³ the death of his father; but either finding his party too weak, or wanting resolution in his own mind to attempt so dangerous an enterprize, he (B), by the advice of the Bramins, performed a number of superstitious rites, ¹⁴ in expectation, that some manifestation of the Divine pleasure would appear in his favour, at length a voice was said to have been heard from heaven, declaring the revenge he sought for should not be attained by him, but by his disciples after his death; and that his sect should at last arrive at the highest point of strength and dominion.

Note B. I have omitted the detail of these superstitions, which would but tire the enlightened European reader; their object was, no doubt, to impress the common people with a belief that their cause was supported by divine favor and protection.

12. Guru Gobind Singh, born on Poh Sudi 7th, 1723, the 22nd of December 1666, was about eight and a half years old at the time of the departure of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, for Delhi.

13. A cursory glance at the history of Guru Gobind Singh would suggest that he was far above personal animosities. In his struggles against the religious intolerance and political iniquities of the Mughals, he was not actuated by the spirit of revenge for the murder of his father but was moved by patriotic feelings born of disinterested love for his people groaning for centuries under the heel of the oppressor. The Guru never led any offensive expeditions against the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb or his provincial deputies or the hill chiefs. In all his wars either against the Rajahs of the Shiwaliks or against the Mughal officers, whether at Bhangani, Nadaun, Anandpur, Chamkaur, Muktsar or any other place, we always find him on the defensive, taking to the sword, as the last resort, in self-defence and for self-preservation. He did not occupy an inch of the enemies' lands as the result of his victories. A person of revengeful spirit cannot be expected to render timely help to his bitterest enemies or to the heir-apparent of his father's murderer. But Guru Govind Singh willingly helped the Shivalik Rajahs in the battle of Nandaun and Prince Muhammad Muazzam Bahadur Shah in the battle of Jajau.

14. The author, here, seems to refer to the *Homa* Ceremony said to have been performed by the Guru at Naina Devi hill. But there appears to be no truth in this. The Guru looked to no gods and goddesses for the source of his strength. He looked only to One *Akal* and to all-Steel. For a detailed discussion on this point, the discerning reader is referred to a very learned discourse, entitled the *Dévi Pūnjan Partāl*, by Bhai Vir Singh, published by the Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, and also embodied in his annotated edition of the *Guru Partap Suraj Granth*, Vol. XII, pp. 4974-5012.

A. H. 1116. The mind of Gooroo Gobind Sing, seems to have become disordered ¹⁵ by A. D. 1704. the influence of these superstitious reveries and to have remained for some time in that state ; but at length having recovered his reason, he put on a dress of dark blue, ¹⁶ let his hair and beard grow to their full length, and instructed his sect to follow his example in these points. He also directed them to arm themselves in expectation of the hour, when the prophecy should be fulfilled.

A. H. 1118. From this time, the Sicks animated with enthusiasm, began to collect together A. D. 1706. from all parts of the Empire, and multitudes of new proselytes were daily enrolled in the sect, which was rendered important by the martyrdom of Taigh Behader. Gooroo Gobind Sing, established a ceremony to be used on the reception of new proselytes, which ceremony is called *Poil*, ¹⁷ and consists in making them drink Sherbet out of a cup, stirring it round with a dagger, and pronouncing a certain incantation (C) at the same time.

Advice being conveyed to Aurungzebe of all these particulars, he sent orders to

Note C. This incantation I could never get the words of, though I took some pains to do so. It seems to be among the Arcana of this sect.

15. The mind of Guru Govind Singh never became 'disordered by the influence of any superstitious reveries'. He had for some time taken to a life of retirement, study and meditation prior to his creation of the Khalsa and adopting a saint-warrior's career, dedicated to the service of his persecuted countrymen.

16. The dark blue dress was worn by him only on one occasion. He never enjoined upon his disciples to wear dark blue or any particular kind of dress.

17. The Pahul (*Poil* of James Browne) or the Baptismal ceremony of the Khalsa as initiated by Guru Govind Singh is performed as follows :

The initiatees, having bathed and dressed in clean clothes, and wearing the symbols of the Khalsa brotherhood, are made to stand, with folded hands, in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, without any distinction of their previous caste or creed or of high or low. Then a group of five selected Sikhs (called *Panj Piārē*), men of ideal Sikh life, sit round a steel basin with clean pure water mixed with sugar balls. One by one these five read the prescribed hymns of the Gurus, stirring the sweetened water with a double-edged sword, a *Khandā*. After the reading of hymns is completed, the *Amrita*, as the sweetened water is then called, is given to them to drink from the same basin by a double round, first from right to left and then from left to right or *vice versa*. The leader or the *Jathedār* of the group then enjoins upon them the *Rahit*, or the Rules of conduct of the Khalsa, telling them, in so many words, that from the moment of their initiation and admission into the Brotherhood of the Khalsa, they are to be considered to have become the sons of a common father, Guru Govind Singh, and a common mother, *Mātā Sahib Devan*, the wife of the Guru, belonging to Anandpur, the Bethlehem of the Khalsa, and cut off entirely from all previous religions or social associations. They are also told never to part with the symbols of the Khalsa.

the Navab Vizier Khan, who was the Foujdar of Sirhind, to take the requisite steps for suppressing this threatening insurrection ; but before this order was received, Gooroo Gobind, having gone to collect his followers from the eastern provinces, died at the city of Patna ;¹⁸ and his wife having died sometime before, two children whom he had, the one about six, the other about five years old, were left under the care of his mother, (the widow of Taigh Behader) who hearing of the Shah's orders to Vizier Khan, attempted to fly with her two grand-children from *Amrutsur* to *Macowal*,¹⁹ which was her native place. Many of Gooroo Gobind's followers accompanied, in order to escort them safe to the place of their destination. By the time they had got to the village

A. H. 1118. of *Chumkore*, which was seven coss from Sirhind, the Navab Vizier Khan, A. D. 1706. according to the Shah's orders, sent a body of troops commanded by Khizzer Khan Malnere, together with the Buckshy of his own army, to take Gooroo Gobind's family prisoners, and bring them to Sirhind. Khizzer Khan having overtaken them at that place, the Sicks, who accompanied the Gooroo's family, defended them with the greatest resolution ; many of the Shah's people were killed, as well as of the Sicks ; but as the former were vastly superior in number, the two children, together with their grandmother, were taken prisoners, and all their wealth and property, which they were carrying away with them was plundered ; the few Sicks who survived, escaped by flight. Khizzer Khan brought his prisoners to the Navab Vizier Khan at Sirhind,²⁰ who put them in confinement, and advised Aurungzebe of it.

They say, that Vizier Khan, who had been forty years Foujdar of Sirhind, had never oppressed any person under his authority, but was distinguished for his justice

18. Patna is the Guru's birth place. He died at Nanded in the Deccan in southern India where he had accompanied Emperor Bahadur Shah, after the death of Aurangzeb, in connection with the peace-negotiations for which he had been invited by the Emperor. For further particulars on this point see *Banda Singh Bahadur*, 8-12.

19. It was not on account of the death of his wife that his two younger sons Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were left under the care of his (Guru Gobind Singh's) mother. It was in the confusion that followed the evacuation of Anandpur by the Guru in December, 1704, that his younger sons and old mother, *Mātā Gujrī*, were separated from him. They were then betrayed by a Brahmin servant, Gangu, into the hands of the Muhammadan officials of Morinda, who in their turn handed them over to Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind.

Mata Jito, the first wife of the Guru had died in December 1700 (6-7th Poh 1757 Bikrami) and his other wives, Sundri and Sahib Devi, lived for some fifty years after his death.

20. It was not Khizar Khan of Malerkotla who captured the sons of Guru Govind Singh in the battle of Chamkaur, but they were betrayed by a servant to the officials of Morinda as mentioned above. For full particulars see Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, Vol. V. 193-99 ; *Banda Singh Bahadur*, 56-59.

and humanity ; and from the natural goodness of his disposition, he conceived a regard for these children of Gooroo Gobind, often sent for them, and shewed them kindness. It happened one day, that he was asking them in a jesting manner, how much they had been plundered of, to which the eldest of the children innocently replied, "that the wealth of Dervishes was too great to be counted". *Suchanund*, a Kettery, who was Dewan to the Navab Vizier Khan, said to him, ²¹ "perhaps these children may give the same kind of answer if they are examined by the Shah ; if so, what will become of us all, and who shall satisfy his Majesty ? it would be safer to put the children to death, which is the only way of securing ourselves from the Shah's rapacity".

Vizier Khan being unwilling to destroy these innocent children, hesitated a long time ; but at length his dread of the Shah's (D) displeasure, should he suspect of having secreted the treasure plundered from Gooroo Gobind's family, getting the better of every other consideration, he said to Khizzer Khan, "Many of your friends and followers were killed by the Sicks, who escorted these children, you ought to retaliate by killing the children, at the cause of the death of so many of the faithful" (E). Khizzer Khan however, rejected the proposal with horror, and nobly replied, "both I and my followers are soldiers, and whoever oppose us in open war, we either kill them, or are killed ourselves ; but what you propose, is the business of an executioner". However, the destined period of the children's lives being come, one Kurruckehy Beg, ²² a Moghul in the Shah's service, undertook to perpetrate this barbarious murder, and went to the prison where the innocent victims were confined : the children clung round the neck of their grandmother ²³ to save themselves, but the villain tore them away, and cut their throats with a knife, in the presence of this miserable woman, who unable longer to bear such a load of calamity, her husband, Taigh Behader, having been murdered before, (as was related), and her grandchildren now butchered before her eyes, sunk under the violence of grief and horror, excited by this last scene, and divine mercy by

Note D. This is a striking instance of the tyranny of Aurangzebe's Government, and indeed of the horrid effect of despotism, on the characters of those who live under its influence ; when we here behold a man naturally mild and compassionate, committing the most atrocious crime, from dread of the consequence which would have attended his acting conformably to his conscience, and the dictates of humanity.

Note E. Retaliation for blood called in the Koran *Kussaus*, is considered by the Mussulmans, as a moral and religious duty to the next in connection.

21. Sucha Nand, the *Péshkār* of Wazir Khan, is reported to have said at this time : "To kill a Cobra (referring to Guru Gobind Singh) and to spare its progeny is not the act of wise men. The offspring of a wolf is always a wolf."

22. The names of the executioners, as mentioned in the Sikh histories were Shashal Beg and Bashal Beg.

23. The children could not have 'clung round the neck of their grandmother to save themselves', as at the time of their execution, they were in the court of Wazir Khan while

an immediate death, released her from further sufferings (F).

A. H. 1118. One *Bundeh*, a *Biragee Fakir*, and the native of a village Pundory,²⁴ in A. D. 1706. the Doab of Beit Jalinder, had been for many years the intimate friend of Gooroo Gobind;²⁵ and hearing of the destruction of his defenceless family, he gave way to the deepest impressions of grief and resentment, which at length settled into a fixed determination to seek revenge; for this purpose, he went to all the most powerful and zealous of the Sicks, who had been the followers of Gooroo Gobind, and having excited in them the same spirit with which he himself was actuated, and enrolled himself in the fraternity of the Sicks, he, with surprising diligence and activity, and aided by uncommon abilities, collected the sect together in arms from all quarters, and inspired them with the most ardent spirit of revenge.

A. H. 1119. Fortunately for the execution of Bundah's design, about this time, Aurungzebe A. D. 1707. died in the Deckan,²⁶ and the succession to the throne being disputed between his sons, (as it is well known to those who are conversant in the history of Hindostan,) great confusion arose in all parts of the empire. Bundah taking advantage of this opportunity, and having collected together a large, though irregular army of Sicks, marched to attack Navab Vizier Khan, who was then at Sirhind, the seat of his government. Vizier Khan came out to give them battle with all the troops he had, and the armies coming to action near *Alwan Siray*,²⁷ the Sicks, inspired by enthusiasm and revenge, gave the Mussulmans a total defeat: Vizier Khan was killed upon the spot, and the greater part of his army was cut in pieces. Proceeding to the town of Sirhind, the Sicks put to death all the family of Vizier Khan,

the old lady was imprisoned in the Tower now known as the *Khuni Burj*.

Note F. Of all the instances of cruelty exercised on the propagators of new doctrines, this is the most barbarous and outrageous; defenceless women and children, have usually escaped, even from religious fury. No wonder then, that the vengeance of the Sicks was so severe.

24. This is, in all probability, based on the *Risalah-i-Nanak Shah* of Munshi Budh Singh. According to all other writers—Irvine, Gian Singh, Macauliffe, Karam Singh and Veni Prasad—Banda Singh was born at Rajori in Punchh district of Western Kashmir.

25. Guru Govind Singh stayed at Nanded, where Banda Singh (then known as Madho Das) had his monastery, for not more than a fortnight, from the last week of September to the 6th of October, 1708. It was during this period that he converted Madho Das into Banda Singh and despatched him to the Punjab.

26. Aurangzeb had died (28th Zi-l-gada, 1118 A. H., February 20, 1707) some nineteen months before the departure of Banda Singh for the Punjab.

27. According to more reliable authorities the battle of Sirhind was fought on the plain of Chappar-Chiri on 24th Rabi-ul-Awwal 1122 A. H., May 12, 1710.

and every dependant and servant belonging to him : ²⁸ Suchanund the Dewan, by whose advice the children of Gooroo Gobind had been murdered, was torn to pieces, with every circumstance of cruelty which savage revenge could dictate. After which, they destroyed all the mosques and tombs belonging to the Mussulmans ; ²⁹ and such was the terror which their severity and fury excited, that neither Hindoos nor Mussulmans found any means of safety, but in acknowledging and submitting to their authority, and professing to belong to their sect ; which disposition, Bundah, who was a man of great art and address, encouraged by every means, with a view to increase his force : treating those with the most flattering kindness who came into the sect, and those who refused with unrelenting severity : so that in a short time, all the districts from Paniput to near Lahore acknowledged the authority of the Sicks ; and Behader Shah being then in the Deckan, with the Imperial army, there was no force in the provinces of Lahore, Dehly or Agra, able to undertake the reduction of the insurgents.

A. H. 1120. Behader Shah, having defeated his brother Kam Bucksh, was desirous of A. D. 1708. remaining some time longer in that part of his dominions, ³⁰ in order to make a complete settlement of all the *Soubah's* (or provinces) of the Deckan ; but when the advices arrived of Bundah's insurrection, and Vizier Khan's defeat and death, the danger appeared too pressing to admit of delay : he therefore determined to move with his whole force towards Sirhind, sending before him an advanced army of cavalry and artillery, under the command of Sultan Kouly Khan, nephew of Rustum dil Khan ; to which he joined all the Mussulmans who had fled from Sirhind and other parts to avoid the fury of the Sicks. His Majesty ordered Sultan Kouly Khan to

28. The family of Wazir Khan had escaped unhurt. On the first receipt of the news of the death of his father and of the defeat of the Sirhind army, the eldest son of Wazir Khan had fled to Delhi with all his family. *Banda Singh Bahadur*, 67-8.

29. The allegation about the destruction of mosques is unfounded. 'The mausoleum of Ahmed Shah, the most magnificent of all such buildings,' wrote Dr. Gokal Chand Narang in 1912, 'still stands as it did before the battle, and is, I think, sufficient evidence of the exaggeration in Latif's statement, which nevertheless is corroborated by Khafi Khan.' *Transformation of Sikhism*, 107, footnote.

30. The first news of the Sikh outbreak under the leadership of Banda Singh was received by the Emperor Bahadur Shah on the 2nd Rabi-ul-Sani, 1122 A. H., May 20, 1710, near Ajmer on his return from the Deccan after the completion of his successful expedition against his younger brother Muhammad Kam Bakhsh. At this time he was on his way to reduce the refractory Rajput chiefs Raja Jai Singh Kachhwaha and Raja Ajit Singh son of Raja Jaswant Singh Rathor.—Kanwar Khan, *Tazkirat-us Salatin*, 150 ; Irvine, *Later Mughals*, i. 104-05.

march by way of Dehly, and thereby stop the progress of the Sicks on that side, protecting the inhabitants as much as possible, to prevent the insurrection from spreading, and to put every man to the sword that he should find with his hair and beard at full length,—that being the characteristic external of the Sicks.

Sultan Kouly Khan, with the zeal of a faithful servant, marched as expeditiously as possible, and having passed by way of Dehly, he came to Panipat ; resolved to attack the Sicks, though his army was exceedingly weak, when compared with the prodigious force now got together under the enemy's standard. The Sicks on their part, being flushed with victory and confident in their numbers, were no less willing to come to action. The battle began, in which there was great slaughter on both sides, but especially on that of the Sicks, who being destitute of discipline, and unprovided with artillery, suffered very severely, when Kisury Singh Buckshy, to whom Bundah had given the command of this division of his army, being killed by an arrow, the Sicks began to give way, were at length totally defeated and the remainder of their army fled to join Bundah, who had remained with the rest of his forces at Sirhind. The next day, Sultan Kouly Khan being joined by a reinforcement sent after him by the Shah, under the command of the Vizier Khan Kanan, marched to Sirhind : Bundah drew up his army, which consisted of between forty and fifty thousand horse and foot, to receive the Mussulmans : the battle was long and bloody, but, at length, the royal army making a desperate charge upon one part of the enemy's front broke through, and a general defeat ensued, with terrible slaughter of the Sicks. Bundah being unable to rally his disheartened troops, fled with as many as he could collect together, and took refuge in a strong fort called Loaghur (G) which stood near Macawal, whither the royal army pursued them and surrounding the fort began to lay siege to it.

In the meantime, the Shah, hearing that Loaghur was invested, marched on as expeditiously as possible, and without halting at Dehly, joined the camp of the Vizier and Sultan Kouly Khan, before Loaghur. By the time the siege had lasted a month, the besieged finding their provisions and ammunition fail them, and being determined to sell their lives as dear as possible, they sallied out of the fort sword in hand. A desperate, but unequal, conflict ensued ; the greater part of the Sicks were cut in pieces on the spot, many were taken prisoners, in which number was their leader Bundah, who was confined in an iron cage, and together with the other prisoners was sent to Dehly, where they were all publickly executed, after having been offered their lives on condition of embracing the Mussulman faith, which they rejected with contempt.³¹

Note G. This place as well as some others mentioned in the History, having been totally destroyed, are not inserted in the map.

31. In this and the previous paragraph the author has confusedly mixed the battles of Amingarh and Sirhind and of Sadhaura and Lohgarh during the reign of Emperor Bahadur Shah, and the siege of Sadhaura and Lohgarh, the siege and fall of Gurdas Nangal and the massacre of Sikhs and Banda Singh at Delhi during the reign of Farrukh

The few remaining Sikhs fled to the mountains, where they concealed themselves; and the Zemindars and Riots of the country who had joined them during their insurrection, partly to secure themselves, and partly for the sake of plunder, now cut off their beards and hair, and returned to their original occupations.

From this time, during the reigns of Behader Shah, Jehander Shah, Ferocksir, and the short reigns of Rafi al Dirjat, and his brother, Abdul Summud Khan being Subadar of Lahore, none of this sect ever ventured to appear in arms; but concealed themselves by every means for near twelve years.³²

In the year of the Hegira 1131, Mahammud Shah being on the throne, and Zekariah Khan being Subadar of Lahore, the Sikhs, though unable to A. H. 1131. appear in any considerable force, began to plunder, and carry on a kind of A. D. 1718. predatory war in the skirts of the mountains, as if to try the temper of government; and this practice they continued with little variation for twenty years.

A. H. 1151. In the year of the Hegira 1151, Nadir Shah, the King of Persia, invaded A. D. 1738. Hindostan, and as his army committed dreadful ravages wherever they went, the inhabitants fled to the hills for safety, while the Subadars of the Provinces, being unable to resist, submitted to the invader.

On this occasion, the Sikhs collecting together, began to commit depredations on all sides, possessing themselves of the property of the inhabitants who had fled to avoid the Persians, and plundering every place in their reach. At the same time they fortified themselves near a village called *Dullival*,³³ on the banks of the Ravy, where they were joined by many Zemindars, who had secretly favoured their sect, and now rejoiced to see it once in a condition to declare itself.

Some time after this, Nadir Shah returned to Persia, having plundered at Dehly wealth to an almost incredible amount, and, having bestowed the Empire of Hindostan on Mahammud Shah as his own free gift. He left behind him Nasir Khan, to collect

Siyar. For a detailed and connected account of these events the reader is referred to *Banda Singh Bahadur*, 124-236.

32. The activities of the Sikhs were in no way slackened during the reigns of Emperors Bahadur Shah, Jahandar Shah and Farrukh Sujar. It was during the reign of Bahadur Shah, as we know, that the Sikhs, under the leadership of Banda Singh, conquered a greater part of the province of Lahore and practically the whole of the territory of Sirhind. During the reign of Jehandar Shah that they re-conquered their capital of Lohgarh (Sadhaura) and reestablished much of their power lost in the last days of 1710. And, it was during the reign of Farrukh Siyar that they struggled hard for the maintenance of their conquered territories which were then finally lost to them after the fall of Gurdas Nangal resulting in the capture of Banda Singh and his companions and their subsequent massacre at Delhi in March-June 1716.

33. The village of Dalléwāl, where the Sikhs built their first fort under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, is situated on the bank of the river Ravee.

the Subah of Cabul, and four Mahls, (districts) belonging to the Subah of Lahore, (being parts of the Empire of Hindostan, made over to him by the treaty with Mahammud Shah). The rest of the Subah of Lahore was continued under Zekariah Khan, as Subadar, on the part of Mahammud Shah. Zekariah Khan appointed Adina Beg Khan to be Foujdar of the *Doab of Bary*.³⁴ with order to reduce the Sicks to obedience.

The force he had with him was fully equal to the execution of that service, but Adina Beg, considering that if he should entirely put an end to all disturbances in that district, there would remain no necessity for continuing him in so extensive a command, he carried on intrigues with the Chiefs of the Sicks, and secretly encouraged them to continue their depredations ; at the same time, pretending to be very desirous of subduing them. From this management, the Sicks became daily more powerful and seized upon several places in the distant parts of the Subah of Lahore. They also began again to perform publick pilgrimages to the Holy Tank at *Amrutsur*, without molestation.

About this time, Zekariah Khan died, leaving two sons, the elder of whom was by the Shah appointed to succeed his father as Subadar of Lahore ; but disputes arising between the two brothers, the affairs of the Province became greatly neglected, and the Sicks increased in strength.

Some time before this, Nadir Shah having been assassinated in Persia, Ahmud Khan Durranny, one of his principal officers, established himself at Kandahar, and seized upon that Province, in which he had considerable family connections ; at the same time laying claim to the other (H) Provinces of Hindostan, which had been ceded to Nadir Shah by the treaty before mentioned, and assuming the title of Shah or King.

Soon after which, he seized upon Nasir Khan, whom Nadir Shah had left Subadar of Cabul, (as said before) together with the treasure which he had collected from the time of Nadir Shah's return to Persia, being above a *crore* of rupees. He also demanded his daughter from him in marriage. Nasir Khan being then entirely in his power, consented, and obtained liberty to go to his followers who were in *Paishawir*, under pretence of making the necessary preparations : he was obliged, however, to leave his son as hostage ; but as soon as he was at liberty, he considered the giving his daughter to a man of a different tribe, as a disgrace not to be submitted to, and therefore began to collect forces for his own defence. Yet some time after, Ahmud Shah Durranny, approaching him, though with a very inferior army, his followers dispersed, and Nasir Khan fled towards Dehly, which furnished Ahmud Shah Durranny A. H. 1159. with a plea for his first invasion of Hindostan. He accordingly passed the A. D. 1746. Attock, Jelum, and Chenab, and came to Lahore.

Note H. These were Cabul, Paishawar, and Tatta : in a word, every thing west of the Attock, or Indus.

34. Adina Beg Khan was appointed the Faujdar of Doaba Bist Jullundur lying between the rivers Beas and Sutlej, comprising the present districts of Hoshiarpur and Jullundur.

Shah Navaz Khan, (one of the sons of Zekariah Khan) who was then Subadar of Lahore, immediately submitted,³⁵ and the Durranny Shah entering the city of Lahore, seized upon the treasury and the armoury there, and proclaimed himself master of that Province also.

It is foreign from the design of this history, to enter into a detail of these events, which are all related in the general history of the empire ; suffice it to say, that the Durranny Shah was at length obliged to return to Kandahar ; A. H. 1160. and that in the year of the Hegira 1160,³⁶ Mahammud Shah having died, A. D. 1747. was succeeded by his son Ahmed Shah, who nominated *Mir Munnoo*, called *Moin ul Mullock*, son to the late Vizier *Kummer ul dien Khan*, to the Subadary of Lahore and Multan.

During these troubles, the Sick Chiefs Jessa Singh Kelal, Chirsah Sing, and Kirwar Sing,³⁷ had got together about 5000 horse ; which army they (for the first time) gave the title of *Dul Khalsa Gee*, or the Army of the State and with which they made themselves masters of the *Doab of Bary*. Moin ul Mullock again appointed Adina Beg Khan to the Foujdary of that Doab, who marching thither, began as formerly to intrigue with the Sicks, and took no effectual means to suppress them. In one action³⁸ indeed, he

35. It is Shah Nawaz Khan who invited Ahmad Shah Durrani to India, but on the persuasion of *Wazir Qamar-ud-Din* of Delhi, he decided to remain loyal to the Mughal Emperor. But when his lieutenant Jahlé Khan treacherously went over to the enemy and his general Asmat Beg Khan was defeated on the bank of the Ravi, Shah Nawaz Khan fled away to Delhi to save his own life leaving the city of Lahore being plundered by the legions of Ahmad Shah.

36. According to more reliable accounts, Muhammad Shah died on 27th Rabi-us-Sani, 1161 A. H., April 15, 1748.

37. Sardar Jassa Singh, the founder of the Ahluwalia Misal, was then the religious as well as secular leader of the *Dal Khalsa ji*, Charhat (chirsa) Singh, the grandfather of Maharajah Ranjit Singh, was the head of the Sukkarchakkia Misal. Suhā Singh, of Mari Kambo, was a hero of great fame. He had accompanied Mehtab Singh of Mirankot, when they set out from Bikaner to chastise Massa Ranghar for the desecration of the holy temple of Amritsar. He was pilled at Lahore on the other side of the Ravi fighting against a detachment of Ahmad Shah Durrani during his third invasion of the Punjab during the Subedari of Mir Mannu. Karora Singh, the first Sardar of the Karor-Singhia Misal, was a leader of uncommon prowess and was a great silent worker in the organization of the *Buddha Dal* of the *Khalsa ji*.

38. In the absence of the date and the place of this action it is difficult to say which particular battle the author here refers to. The *Ahwali-i-Adina Beg* also does not help us on this point. In all probability, it points to the siege of Ram Rauni, Amritsar, towards the close of 1748. In this siege the Sikhs were reduced to great extremities, but fortunately for them Ahmad Shah invaded India a second time, on the one side, and Shah Nawaz Khan supported by a large army from Delhi established

defeated them, and killed about 600 Sicks ; but as the confusion prevailing in the empire, had reduced thousands of people to distress, they were daily joining the Sicks for the sake of plunder, took the *Poil*, and let their hair grow, upon which they inrolled in the *Dul*, which now began to increase with surprising rapidity (I).

A. H. 1163. About three years after this, Ahmed Shah Durranny, again invaded Hindostan, A. D. 1750.³⁹ and having defeated Moin ul Mullock, seized on Lahore, levied a very heavy contribution from it, and afterwards appointed Moin ul Mullock to be Subadar on his part of Lahore and Multan, having given the daughter of Moin ul Mullock in marriage to his own son, the Prince Timur Shah : after this, the Durranny Shah returned to Kandahar.

During this war, Adina Beg Khan having joined Moin ul Mullock with all his forces, the Sicks had nothing left to oppose them, and therefore they daily became more formidable. They cut off the royal garrison in the Fort of Tanniser, destroyed the fort, and plundered all the neighbouring districts.

After the departure of the Durranny Shah, Moin ul Mullock again sent Adina Beg Khan against the Sicks, who seemed now to be inclined to discharge his duty with fidelity, for having received intelligence that they were assembled near Macowal,⁴⁰ to celebrate the festival of the *Hooly*, he, by a forced march, surprised them, and put so many of them to death, that the remainder were obliged to disperse for a while, but soon began to plunder again in small parties.

A. H. 1165. In the year of the Hegira 1165, Moin ul Mullock died, and his widow A. D. 1752. appointed one Beckary Khan to manage the government of her deceased husband as Naib (or deputy) on her part ; but having detected him in a design to seize on her person, and usurp the government himself, she caused

himself at Multan, a province also under the Subedari of Mir Mannu, on the other. On the advice of his Diwan, Kaura Mall, Mir Mannu ordered the siege of Ram Rauni to be raised, and the Sikhs were, therefore, left to themselves for a short time. For further particulars see Rattan Singh, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 401-04 ; Khushwaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, 67-8 ; Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, i 129 ; Ganda Singh, *Maharaja Kaura Mall Bahadur*, 22, 30 ; *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, 72-80.

Note I. This naturally accounts for the rapid rise of the Sicks, which commenced about this time.

39. This was the third invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1751-52, when Mir Mannu suffered a defeat at the hands of the Durranis on March 6, 1752 (Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1, 1165 A. H., Chaitra Sudi 2, 1809 Bk.) after Kura Mall had been shot dead by Bazid Khan, a Pathan of Kasur, at the instigation of Adina Beg Khan.

40. The action of Makhwal seems to have taken place on March 19-20, 1753, when the Sikhs were surprised by Adina Beg Khan on the Holi or Hola Muhalla day (Phalgun Puran-masi or Chet Vadi 1).

him to be strangled ; and appointed Syed gumeil ul dien Khan to the office of her Naib. ⁴¹

A short time after this, the troubles arising at Dehly, which ended in the Vizier Ghazi ul dien Khan's deposing Ahmed Shah, and raising to the throne Alumgire Sani, ⁴² the reins of government became entirely relaxed, and the Sicks gathered new strength.

A. H. 1169. In the year of the Hegira 1169, Ahmed Shah Durranny again invaded A. D. 1755. Hindostan, and came to Lahore. By this time, the Sicks were become very numerous, and their *Dul* was in the neighbourhood of Lahore ; but they were afraid to attack the Durranny army : however, they plundered all people who straggled from the camp, and cut off provisions going to it. But the Durranny Shah being desirous of getting as soon as possible to Dehly, took no notice of these insults.

After plundering Dehly, Muttra, and all the circumjacent towns and villages, and exercising unheard of barbarities, the Durranny Shah marched back to Kandahar, leaving a chief of the name of Ahmed Khan to command in Sirhind, and his own son, the Prince Timur Shah, with an army under the command of Jehan Khan, one of his best officers, to collect the Subahs of Lahore and Multan. ⁴³

Jehan Khan from a principle of religious zeal, destroyed the places of worship belonging to the Sicks at *Amrutsar*, and filled up the sacred Tank, which they so highly venerate : upon which the Sicks collected together under their chiefs from all quarters, and blockading the city of Lahore, collected the revenues of the country all round for their own use. Jehan Khan with the Prince, marched out to give them battle ; but after several actions, finding the Sicks too numerous for him to contend with, he retreated to Kandahar. ⁴⁴

41. Mir Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu) died on the 7th of Muharram, 1167 A. H., November 4, 1753. He was succeeded by his infant son Muhammad Amin Khan as governor with Mir Momin Khan as his deputy. But the latter, though an experienced noble, was helpless as all power lay in the hands of the regent mother Mughlani Begam. There was all confusion after the death of Muhammad Amin Khan (end May, 1754) and it resulted in the appointment of Sayyad Jamil-ud-Din who replaced the Begam's uncle, Khwaja Udebullah Khan. (Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, ii. 50-64 ; Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, 145-47.)

42. Alamgir II was placed on the throne of Delhi by Ghazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk on June 2, 1754.

43. All this took place during the fourth Indian invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani, November 1756—April 1757. (*Ahmad Shah Durrani*, 148-89.)

44. Taimur Shah and Jahan Khan stayed in the Punjab for only one year, May 1757 to April 1758. On the 19th of April, 1758, they left for Afghanistan, having been pushed out of the country by the combined efforts of the Sikhs and the Marathas.

Upon this occasion, Jessa Sing Kelal, who was at the time commander-in-chief of the *Dul*, struck rupees in his own name, at the royal mint at Lahore, with the following inscription, "Jessa Kelal conquered the country of Ahmed, and struck this coin by the Grace of God".⁴⁵

After the retreat of Jehan Khan, the Court of Dehly appointed Adina Beg Khan to be Subadar of Lahore ;⁴⁶ but the force with which he was furnished by so weak a government was not equal to encountering the Sicks : he was therefore obliged to stop at Sirhind ; and finding that he could not obtain any assistance from the administration at Dehly, he applied to the Marhatta chief Rogonaut Row, who at that time commanded a large army in the Province of Agra, and offered to assist him in reducing Punjab, to which the Marhatta chief agreed, and marched to Sirhind ; where he was joined by Adina Beg Khan with his own army, and some of the inferior Sick chiefs, whom he had brought over by great promises.⁴⁷

Their first operation was to expel and plunder Ahmed Khan,⁴⁸ whom the Durranny Shah had left to command in Sirhind. On this occasion, the Sick Chiefs, who had joined Adina Beg Khan plundered the town of Sirhind, which gave great offence to the Marhatta Chiefs, who projected falling upon the Sicks, and plundering them in return : which coming to the knowledge of Adina Beg Khan, by whose influence these Sicks had been induced to join the Marhattas, he gave them immediate notice of the design which was formed against them, upon which they marched away in the night.⁴⁹

The Sick leaders who were in possession of Lahore, did not think their army a match for the Marhattas, when reinforced by Adina Beg Khan, they therefore drew off to the skirts of the mountains ; and the Marhattas established garrisons in Lahore, Multan, &c. But their government was of short duration, for soon after this, attempting to expel the Rohillas from their possession, *Nujeab ul Doulah*, the principal Rohilla chief, applied to the Durrany

Note K. All the Rohilla tribes come from the country belonging to the Durranny Shah, and those settled in Hindostan, still call him their king.

45. See footnote 8 of *Introduction*.

46. Adina Beg Khan was not appointed the Subehdar by the Court of Delhi but he became governor (after Prince Taimur and Jahan Khan had left the Punjab) under an agreement to pay seventyfive lakhs of rupees annually to the Marathas.

47. The Marathas and the Sikhs were invited by Adina Beg Khan early in 1758 to expell Prince Taimur and Sardar Jahan Khan.

48. It was Abdus-Samad Khan (and not Ahmad Khan) who had been left by Ahmed Shah Durrani at Sirhind. The place was captured on the 21st of March 1758 and the Sikhs were the first to enter it.

49. The Sikhs did not march away from Sirhind leaving Adina Beg Khan alone with the Marathas. But, "It was then agreed that, as there was a fear of collision between the two warrior peoples, the Sikhs, who numbered about fifteen thousand, should always keep two stages ahead of the Marathas in their march upon Lahore." *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, 201.)

Shah for assistance : alleging, that being his subjects, (K) they could apply to none else for redress, and that, therefore, they entreated he would support them against the infidels.

Ahmed Shah Durrany accordingly left Kandahar, with his whole force, and as soon it was known that he had crossed the Attock, all the Mahratta garrisons in Lahore and Multan fled without waiting for his nearer approach.

A. H. 1172 The Vizier Ghazi ul dien Khan, who kept his Majesty Alumgire Sani as a prisoner in his own palace, expecting that the Durrany Shah would call him to a severe account, if Alumgire Sani should complain to him ; in a transport of rage and despair he put him to death : and after placing another of the royal line upon the throne by the title of Shah Jehan Sani, he left Dehly with all his forces and joined the Mahratta army which was then besieging the Rohillas at *Suketall*.

The events of this campaign are foreign to our subject ; it is only necessary to say that the Durrany Shah having raised the siege of Sukertall and defeated the Mahratta chiefs Junkoo and Mulhar Row in several actions, in one of which Dattea Pateel (the elder brother of Mahado Row Sindea) was killed,⁵⁰ and being joined by all the Rohilla chiefs, as also by the Navab Shuja ul Dowla, cantoned for the rainy season near *Coel* in the Doab, between the Ganges and the Jumna.

A. H. 1173. While Ahmed Shah Durrany remained at Coel, he received advice that Adina Beg Khan whom he had once more appointed Subadar of Lahore, was dead,⁵¹ and that the Sicks, taking advantage of that event, had assembled in great numbers, attacked and defeated *Sumbu Das*,⁵² the Dewan of Adina Beg Khan, who after his master's death had attempted to keep things in order. On this intelligence, the Durrany Shah appointed Zien Khan to be Foujdar of Sirhind, and Bullund Khan to be Subadar of Lahore, and despatched them to their stations with an army of 10,000 horse.

A. H. 1173. The conclusion of the rains was followed by that famous campaign, which **A. D. 1759.** put to final trial the grand question of *Empire* between the Mussulmans, and the Mahrattas, and ending by the fatal battle of Paniput, which was **A. H. 1174.** fought on the 20th of Jemad ul Sani 1174,⁵³ decided it in favour of the

Note K. All the Rohilla tribes come from the country belonging to the Durrany Shah, and those settled in Hindostan, still call him their king.

50. Dattaji Patil was killed in the battle of Barari ghat, January 9, 1760.

51. Adina Beg Khan had died on September 15, 1758, some fourteen months before Ahmed Shah Durrani descended upon the Panjab for the fifth time in November 1759. There was, therefore, no occasion for him to appoint Adina Beg subedar of Lahore.

52. This should be Bishambhar Das.

53. 20th Jamadi-us-Sani corresponds to January 27, 1761. The battle of Panipat was, in fact, fought on January 14, 1761.

A. D. 1760. Mussulmans, and gave a blow to the Mahratta power, which it has not entirely recovered yet.

After this, Ahmed Shah Durrany, having settled the government at Dehly in the hands of Nujeib ul Doula, and placed *Mirza Jewan Buckt* on the throne, as representative of his father *Shah Alum*, who was then in Bengal, he marched back towards Kandahar.

As soon as he had passed the Sutledge, the Sicks began to plunder the stragglers from his camp, which he forebore to resent at that time, his army being loaded with plunder ; however, to secure his camp from insult, he every night threw up a slight work round it, and in this manner he continued his march to the Attock, the Sicks following him all the way.

When the Durrany army had passed the Attock, the Sicks returned, and having blockaded Lahore, they compelled Bullund Khan to retreat with his garrison, upon which they took possession of that city, and all the country from the Attock to Sirhind.

A. H. 1174. However, Zein Khan, whom the Durrany Shah had left as Foujdar of Sirhind, A. D. 1760. being assisted by Hinghun Khan,⁵⁴ a pataan chief, of the district of Malnair (south west from Sirhind) still supported himself against them.

A. H. 1175. The following year, the Sicks to the number of about forty thousand horse, A. D. 1761. ravaged the whole territory of Malnair,⁵⁵ in revenge for the assistance given by Hinghun Khan⁵⁴ to the Durrany Aumil ; but soon after Ahmed Shah Durrany having marched to Lahore, to punish the Sicks, for having expelled Bullund Khan, Hinghun Khan⁵⁴ contrived in the night to escape, and fled to the Durrany camp for protection. The Durrany Shah sent thirty thousand horse under his conduct, who marching seventy crores (one hundred and forty miles) almost without (L) intermission, surprized the army of the Sicks, at a place called *Barnala*, and put great numbers to the sword⁵⁵ ; the rest as usual, dispersed for a time ; after which, the Shah proceeded to Sirhind, where he was met by Nujeib ul Dowla, and the other principal Omrahs ; and having received their compliments, returned back to Kandahar,

Note L. The horses used by the Durranies, are of the breed called Turki ; they are not large, but the most useful, quiet, and best bottomed horses, that are I believe in the world. They live to a great age, so that I have seen horses in the use of common troopers that they have declared to be near forty years old.

54. This should be Bheekhan Khan. *Hinghun* is an incorrect reading of the name in the Persian manuscript.

55. This action, called *Wadda Ghalughara* by the Sikh historians, is believed to have been fought near the villages of Kup and Raheera, in the erstwhile Malerkotla state, on the 11th of Rajjab, 1175 A. H., February 5, 1762, when about ten thousand Sikh lives mostly women, children and old men, are said to have been lost. (*Ahmed Shah Durrani*, 273-80).

leaving Saudet yab Khan, one of his officers with a large detachment in the Doab of Beit Jalinder, and Rajah *Cabully Mul* as Subadar of Lahore.

A. H. 1176. The beginning of the following year, the Sicks assembling again, drove
A. D. 1762. Rajah Cabully Mul out of Lahore, and Saudet yab Khan, from the Doab of Beit Jalinder, establishing themselves in both those places ; after which they invaded Malnair,⁵⁶ defeated and killed Hinghun Khan,⁵⁴ a man of great courage and ability, who had long been a considerable check to their progress in that quarter.

A. H. 1176. They next attacked Sirhind, and coming to action with Zien Khan, the Durrany
A. D. 1762. Foujdar, near Rajah Seray, defeated and killed him also ; after which they plundered and burnt Sirhind, having a particular enthusiastick hatred to that place, on account of the murder of Gooroo Gobind's children, which was perpetrated there.⁵⁷ By these successes, the whole country from the Attock to Karnal, acknowledged the authority of the Sicks.

A. H. 1177. The following year, Nujeib ul Dowla being engaged in a war with *Surujh*
A. D. 1763. *Mul*, the Rajah of the Jauts, the Sick chiefs, Koshial Sing, Bugheil Sing, Sahib Sing, Baug Singh, Kurrum Sing, and Roy Sing, crossed the Jumna with their forces, and plundered the district of Saharunpoor belonging to Nujeib ul Dowla ; upon which that chief immediately marched to protect his own country, and partly by force, partly by negotiation, got the Sicks to repass the Jumna.

A. H. 1178. The next year Jewar Singh, the son and successor of *Surugh Mul*,⁵⁸ in order
A. D. 1764. to revenge the death of his father, who had been killed the year before in battle against Nujeib ul Dowla, collected together all his own followers, and being reinforced by thirty thousand Mahrattas under Mulhar Row, and twenty-five thousand Sicks under several different chiefs, laid seige to the city of Dehly. The seige lasted three months, in which time Nujeib ul Dowla, having written advice of his situation to Ahmed Shah Durrany, and solicited his aid, his Majesty immediately marched from Cabul where he then was, and to avoid any interruption from the Sicks, he proceeded along the skirts of the mountains, and had reached as far as *Gurry Kotanah*, when a peace was concluded between Nujeib ul Dowla and Jewar Sing, through

56. Maler (Kotla) and not Malner.

57. As after the death and defeat of Zain Khan on January 14, 1764, no Sikh Sardar would accept the accursed city of Sirhind on account of its evil associations, the leading residents were invited to choose their own master. They declared in favour of Bhai Bhuddha Singh (son of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, a descendant of Bhai Bhagtu), elder brother of Bhai Desu Singh of Kaithal. Thus was Sirhind assigned (*ardāsā karwā dittā giā*) to Bhai Buddha Singh with a religious prayer. It was, however, later on purchased by Sardar Ala Singh of Patiala for twenty-five thousand rupees.

58. The Jat Raja of Bharatpur.

the mediation of Mulhar Row, and the seige of Dehly was raised. Nujeib ul Dowla immediately sent intelligence of this to the Durrany Shah, and after expressing his gratitude for the ready assistance his Majesty had afforded him, he entreated him to return from the place which he was then at, lest A. H. 1178. the arrival of his army in the neighbourhood of Dehly should renew the A. D. 1764. calamities of this unhappy city. The Durrany Shah according to this address, repassed the Sutledge, and marched back towards his own country by the Lahore road.

In the meantime, the Sick chiefs, determined to revenge the defeat they had suffered at Barnala, assembled their whole force at Amrutsur, to the number of sixty thousand horse and foot; and took an oath to exert every effort to cut off the Shah's army. Ahmed Shah Durrany receiving advice of this, sent a person to the Sick leaders in quality of Ambassador, to negotiate a peace with them, and prevent that effusion of blood, which their desperate determination threatened to produce, but on the arrival of this person in the camp of the Sicks, instead of listennning to his proposals, they plundered him and his followers, and drove them away. Ahmed Shah Durranny finding all accomodation impossible, marched immediately to give battle to the Sicks; and coming to Amrutsur in the evening, encamped close to the enemy. In the morning the Sicks drew up their army on foot, and immediately proceeded to attack the Durrannies sword in hand and the Durrannies, with equal resolution, received their attack on foot also. The battle was long and bloody, and the loss so great on both sides, that at length both armies drew off to their respective camps; the next morning neither party was inclined to renew the conflict, and the Shah resumed his march without any further interruption (M).

Some time after this, Ahmed Shah Durrany died,⁵⁹ and was succeeded by his son the Prince Timur Shah, who has been too much employed on the side of Persia in keeping possession of the provinces usurped by his father from that empire, to have leisure for attempting to reduce the power of the Sicks. Nor A. H. 1178 has any Potentate yet appeared on the side of Hindostan, equal to such a talk; A. D. 1764. some feeble attempts have been made, which have only confirmed the strength of the Sick Government, as a little water thrown on a fire, does but increase its heat; so that for twenty years past, they have employed themselves in completely reducing the whole country from Attock to Karnal, and dividing it among their own sect.

Soon after the last expulsion of the Aumils of the Durranny Shah, the Sicks held a general Diet at Amrutsur, in which they determined to call in the rupees which were struck in the name of Jessa Kelal, and to strike them for the future in the name of their

Note M. It is to be supposed, that in a battle thus disputed, both sides claimed the victory; the Durrannies bring in proof, their having marched on unmolested; the Sicks, that the Durrany Shah never again returned to Lahore.

59. Ahmad Shah Durrani died on October 16-17 (Night), 1772.

Gooroos, with an inscription to this effect, “*Gooroo Gobind Sing* received from Nanuck, the Daig, (N) the sword and rapid victory,”⁶⁰ which coin is current throughout their dominions to this day.

Thus has the Divine pleasure, notified to Gooroo Gobind, been at the length fulfilled ; and thus has Providence raised up this sect in consideration of the piety and charity of Gooroo Nanuck, its founder, that mankind beholding the reward of virtue, may learn to practise it.

THUS far the Persian manuscript extends ; to which I beg leave to add that the Sicks are the only one of the many powers who have enriched themselves out of the many spoils of the Mogul Empire, which fairly and openly avows its independence. They will not suffer the name of his Majesty Shah Alum to appear upon their coin ; but have substituted that of their Gooroo ; and instead of the year of the King’s reign, and of the Hegira, which is the established date on all the coins throughout the empire, they use the era of *Bickermajeet*, called the *Sumbut*.

1779 : After Ahmed Shah Durrany returned to Kandahar in 1764, as has been related, though the Sicks possessed themselves of the town and province of Lahore, and of all the open country of Multan, yet the Durrany garrison of Multan still remained in that fortress till the death of Ahmed Shah Durrany : soon after which, the Sicks compelled them to retire, and placed a garrison of their own there ; But in the year 1779, Timur Shah (the successor to Ahmed Shah Duranny) came from Cabul, with a large army, and laying siege to Multan, took it, after defeating the army sent by the Sicks to raise the siege : when he returned to Cabul leaving a garrison in Multan, which has remained there ever since.

1785 : Since the complete settlement of the Sicks in their present possessions, which was not entirely effected till near the year 1770, the chiefs to the westward of the Sutledge, who are the most powerful, have not been engaged in any important expedition, till the year 1785, when they invaded the Rajah of Jumboo, and compelled him to pay them tribute.

The incursions which are made annually into the territories lately belonging to Zabita Khan, are merely effected by a temporary confederacy of the chiefs between the Sutledge and the Jumna.

These incursions are sometimes carried across the Ganges (O) into the Vizier’s territories, as happened in March 1785, when a large body of Sicks passed over, and remained in that country several days, plundering to an immense amount, and burning and destroying the villages without opposition, though repeated advice had been received beforehand of their designs. But these insults may always be prevented by common attention in the Vizier’s administration, and by sending proper detachments to the several

Note N. This has been explained in the Introduction. I have several of these rupees in my possession.

Note O. From the middle of March till June, the Ganges is fordable in several places between the falls at Hardwar and the town of Ferockabad.

60. See footnote 8 of *Introduction*.

fords of the Ganges during the dry season.

In 1785, Mahadjee Scindea (having before seized on the Shah's person, and the entire administration of his affairs) entered into an alliance with the leaders of the Sicks, between the Sutledge and the Jumna, both offensive and defensive: one of the articles of which treaty expressly says as follows:—"Besides the royal lands, whatever shall be acquired by either party (Scindea or the Sicks) with mutual consent, *on either side the Jumna*, from Hindoos or Mussulmans, one third thereof shall belong to the *Khalsah Gee*" (the Sick State). This clearly points at the Vizier's country.⁶¹

As soon as this treaty was framed, I obtained a copy of it, which I transmitted to Mr. Macpherson, then acting as Governor-General, April the 9th. What use he made of the information, I cannot tell: but surely a confederacy of two such formidable powers as the Sicks and Mahrattas, close to the Vizier's frontier, must afford matter for very serious apprehension to every person who is anxious for the safety of the Company's possessions in India, which are so intimately connected with those of the Vizier, that prosperity or calamity must be in common to them both.

In this point of view, I beg leave to conclude this sketch, with my earnest recommendation of that circumstance to the attention of the Company's administration, for even admitting all that the advocates for Scindea can say of his sincerity, he is but mortal; and with him will expire all that security which has been supposed to arise from his personal character.

61. See my article on *The Maratha-Sikh Treaty of 1785.* (*Pro. Ind. Hist. Congress*, 1939, Calcutta.)

A List of Sick Sirdars, with the places of their Residence, and the number of their Forces—

Place of Residence	of Sirdar Name	Horse	Foot	Total	Remarks
Karnawl (Karnal)	Rajah Gudgeput Sing (Gajpat Singh)	1,500	500		
Tannasar (Thanesar)	Baug Sing' Bunga Sing (Bhag Singh Bhanga Singh)	750	250		
Shawbad (Shahabad)	Currum Sing Nermulla (Karam Singh Nirmala)	750	250		
Amballa	Gurdut Sing (Gurdit Singh)	750	250		
Sirhind	Jussa Sing (Jassa Singh)	1,500	500		
Conna Serai (Khanna)	Sonde Sing	225	75		
Pail Serai	Hurre Sing Dulaval (Hari Singh Dalle wali)	1,500	500		
Boria (Buria)	Rai Sing Baug Sing	750	250		From the Jumna to the Sutlej
Secundra	Dewan Sing Lung	750	250		
Damla	Dulcha Sing	750	250		
Beboin	Gordut Sing	750	550		
Gurry Cotana	Hucumut Sing	150	50		
Monimajera	Buget Sing	375	125		
Pehova	Desu Sing	1,125	375		
Curta	Dunna Sing	1,500	500		
Futtiabad	Rajah Sahib Sing	4,500	1500		
Natta	Hamir Sing	600	200		
		18,225	6,075	24,300	
Nurmehal	Bughel Sing	750	250		
Necoder	Tarra Sing Gaiba	2,250	750		
Tute Serai	Jusa Sing	3,000	1000		
Catta	Tarra Sing Caker	375	125		Doaba of Beit Jalinder
Ghur Samger	Cuseal Sing	150	50		
(Garh Shankar)	(Khushal Singh)				
Jeledur	Ma Sing	750	250		
Capure Tulla	Jessa Sing	3,000	1000		
		10,275	3,425	13,700	
Lahore	Guger Sing				
	Soba Sing	22,150	8,050	30,200	Doab of Bary
	Lina Sing				
Shah Dera	Maha Sing	15,000	5,000	20,000	Doaba of Retchena
Gujerat	Guger Sing				Doabes of Jenhat & Sind Sagur
Shah Doula					
Rotasgur } }	Maha Sing	7,500	2,500	10,000	
		73,150	25,050	98,200	

GURU ARJUN'S MARTYRDOM

(From Father Jerome Xavier's letter, September 25, 1606)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

There is only one solitary reference to the Sikh Gurus known to exist in the records of the contemporary European writers, and that is about Guru Arjun's death.* It is to be found in a Portugese letter written from Lahore on September 25, 1606, by the well-known Jesuit Father Jerome Xavier to the Provincial at Goa. The substance of it is reproduced by Father Fernao Gurreiro, S. J., in his *Relacao Annual das Coisas que Fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus nas partes da India Oriental*, printed at Lisbon in Portugal in 1609 (New edition, 3 vols, Coimbra-Lisbon, 1930-42).

While describing the flight of the rebellious prince Khusru, son of Emperor Jahangir, from Agra to the Panjab, Fr. Xavier mentioned towards the end of his letter the arrest and death of Guru Arjun. An English translation of the relevant portion of the letter is given by Mr. John A. D'Silva in his article *The Rebellion of Prince Khusro according to Jesuit sources*, published in the *Journal of Indian History*, volume V, 1927, p. 278 ; also in C. H. Payne's *Jahangir and the Jesuits* (The Broadway Travellers Series), pp. 11-12.

Fr. Xavier's account appears to be based on second-hand information regarding the details of tortures to which Guru Arjun was subjected. There is no indication in the letter that Fr. Xavier knew the Guru personally or that he had seen him during his imprisonment at Lahore or that he was an eye-witness of what he has recorded in his letter. My only apology for reproducing the relevant portion of the letter is that it is the earliest account written by a contemporary European, and that when read along with Emperor Jahangir's own account of the motives behind the persecution and death of Guru Arjun, as given in the Emperor's autobiography, the *Tuzk-i-Jahāngīrī*, together with present editor's notes, it would help students of history to arrive at conclusions not far from truth.

* An European surgeon, an Englishman, is said to have attended Guru Gobind Singh during his last days at Nander in the Deccan. When Emperor Bahadur Shah, then (September-October, 1708) encamped at Nander, heard the Guru having been stabbed by a Pathan, he sent a surgeon to attend to his wound. Dhian Singh in his (manuscript) *Daswen Pātshāh kā Antam Kautak* tells us that (*Das mohran roz Sāhib dewain jarāhdār kau; Kāl usih dā nām, Angez sī*) he was an Englishman, Call by name, and that the Guru paid him ten gold mohars a day. But to the best of our knowledge, no record of him has so far been discovered, nor has any other reference to him been traced in the Mughal or English Fractory records.

According to the Emperor's memoirs, Guru Arjun's teachings had so captivated the hearts of many Hindus and Muslims that they called him Guru (became his disciples) and expressed full faith in him. The Emperor did not like this. It is true that he was not a religious bigot, but, for political reasons, he had in the beginning of his reign to play the role of a fanatic to win the sympathies of the bigoted Muslim divines, the *mullahs*, who were opposed to the broad and open-minded religious policy of his father, Akbar the Great. He had, therefore, evidently to exhibit his zeal for Islam as interpreted and practised by the law-givers, promised to uphold Islam, when he came to the throne, and suppress all those who preached un-Islamic or non-Islamic creeds. Against Sikhism, the Emperor was deeply prejudiced. There is no doubt about it. And it was this religious prejudice that was mainly responsible for the persecution and death of Guru Arjun. The visit of the rebellious prince Khusru to the Guru's headquarters at Goindwal during his flight to the Punjab only afforded an opportunity for his arrest. The Emperor writes in the *Tuzk* :

"In Goindwal, which is situated on the Bank of the river Biyah (Beas), there lived a Hindu, named Arjun, in the garb of *Pir* and *Shaikh*, so much so that having captivated many simple-hearted Hindus, nay even foolish and stupid Muslims, by his ways and manners, he had noised himself about as a religious and worldly leader. They called him *Guru*, and from all directions fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For years the thought had been presenting itself to me that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam.

"At last when Khusrau passed along this road, this insignificant fellow made up his mind to wait upon him. Khusrau happened to halt at the place where he was. He (Guru Arjun) came and saw him, and conveyed some preconceived things to him and made on his forehead a finger-mark in saffron, which the Hindus in their terminology call *qashqā* (*tikā*) and is considered propitious. When this came to the ears of our majesty, and I fully knew his heresies, I ordered that he should be brought into my presence, and having handed over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtaza Khan, and having confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures.

"There were two other persons, Rajoo and Amba by name. They led a life of tyranny and oppression under the shadow of Daulat Khan *Khwājā-serā*'s protection. During the few days when Khusrau was near Lahore, they committed depredations. I ordered that Rajoo be hanged and that a fine be levied on Amba because he was known to be a rich man. One lakh and fifteen thousand rupees were received from him. This amount I ordered to be spent upon artillery and for charitable purposes."

From the above it is clear that long before the rebellion of his son, Emperor Jahangir had been incensed against Guru Arjun on account of his *increasing religious influence* amongst the Hindus and *Muslims*. And, therefore, he was *for years* (*muddat-hā*, for a long time) thinking of either putting an end to his religious preachings, which he contemptuously calls 'false traffic' (*dukān-i-bātal*), or making a Mussalman of him. It is

of great historical significance to note that no report was made to the Emperor of the visit of Khusru to Guru Arjun on the spot at Goindwal, when the Emperor crossed the river at its ferry, nor did anything on the subject 'come to his ears' for about a month after his departure from Goindwal, during which period the prince had been arrested and made prisoner and a large number of his followers had been impaled, and both of his accomplices Hasan Beg and Abdur Rahim had been inclosed and sewed up in the raw hides of a cow and a donkey. It was only *on the eve of the Emperor's departure* from Lahore that the report of the alleged complicity of Guru Arjun in the rebellion was made to the Emperor. This throws a doubt on the truth of the report. If Khusru had actually met the Guru and had been blessed by him, it would certainly have been reported to the Emperor on the spot at Goindwal or in its neighbourhood where it could have been easily verified, and the Guru would have been carried a prisoner to Lahore with him.

The author of the *Mahma Parkash* tells us that the Guru was then at Tarn Taran and not at Goindwal. Khusru could not have, therefore, met him. No wonder that the whole story might have been an imaginary concoction by the Guru's traducers with a view to entangling him in the rebellion which had brought such severe punishments on Khusru and his friends and companions. Jahangir, apparently, found in this concocted report a long-looked-for opportunity for putting an end to the 'false traffic', that is, the religious activities of Guru Arjun, and, without any investigation whatever, he ordered him to be tortured to death.

Muhsin Fani, the author of the *Dabistan-i-mazahib* says that a heavy fine was imposed on the Guru who was unable to pay it. He was, therefore, imprisoned at Lahore where he died from the heat of the sun, the severity of the summer and the tortures of the bailiffs. But Jahangir makes no mention of any fine imposed on the Guru. He only mentions the death sentence passed against him. Apparently the fine of two lakhs of rupees demanded from Amba gave currency to the wrongful impression amongst the people who were Muhsin Fani's sources of information. Might be, that the non-payment of the so-called fine by the Guru had been advertised by his enemies to explain away the cause of his death.

The exact date of Guru Arjun's death is Jesht Sudi 4, 1663 Bk., Asharh 2, 1663 Bk., Safar 2, 1015 Al-Hijri, corresponding to May 30, 1606 A. D.

It is in the light of Emperor Jahangir's own account and the discussion thereon that the letter of Father Jerome Xavier should be read.

Ganda Singh

**Extract from Fr. Jerome Xavier's letter dated Lahore,
September 25, 1606, translated by John A. D'Silva**

When the prince [Khusro, son of Emperor Jahangir] was fleeing from Agra, on that road¹ there was a pagan,² called the *guru*, who was considered among the pagans like our Pope. He was supposed to be a holy man and honoured as such. And on account of his dignity and reputation, the prince visited him desirous of hearing a good prophecy from him. The Guru congratulated him for assuming sovereignty³ and applied three marks on his forehead.⁴ Although the Guru was a heathen, and the prince a Mussulman, yet he was glad in putting on the prince's forehead that pagan sign as a mark of good success in his enterprise, taking the prince as the son of a pagan mother.⁵ The prince received this sign on account of the wide reputation of the sanctity of the *guru*. The King came to know of this. Keeping the prince as a prisoner, he ordered the Guru to be brought before him and imprisoned him also.

Some pagans begged the King to release him, as he was their saint. At last it was settled that he should pay a fine of 100,000 cruzados.⁶ This was done at the request of a rich pagan⁷ who remained as a surety for him. He thought that the King might remit the fine or the saint might pay, or that he might borrow that amount, but in this

1. At Goindwal, on the bank of the river Beas, in the present district of Amritsar, Panjab.

2. Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs.

3. This is apparently based on hearsay, as Fr. Xavier never saw or met the Guru either at Goindwal or at Lahore.

That the Guru congratulated Khusru for assuming sovereignty is not borne out by any other authority.

According to Macauliffe (*Sikh Religion*, iii. 85), Khusrau visited the Guru at Tarn Taran and the latter 'gave him five thousand rupees to defray his expenses to Kabul'. On being questioned by the Emperor on this point, the Guru is said to have replied : 'I regard all people, whether Hindu or Musalman, rich or poor, friend or foe, without love or hate; and it is on this account that I gave thy son some money for his journey and not because he was in opposition to thee. If I had not assisted him in his forlorn condition, and so shown some regard for the kindness of thy father, the Emperor Akbar, to myself, all men would have despised me for my heartlessness and ingratitude, or they would say that I was afraid of thee. This would have been unworthy of a follower of Guru Nanak, the world's Guru'. (*Ibid*, iii. 91.)

4. This again is incorrect and based on wrong information. The Sikh Gurus never applied marks on the forehead of any one except of those whom they nominated as their successors.

5. Khusro's mother, Man Bai, was the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber (Jaipur). (Tod, *Annals*, ii. 286.)

6. As stated in the *Introductory Note*, there is no mention in Jahangir's *Tuzk* of any fine having been imposed by him on Guru Arjun. The fine was, in fact, imposed on one Amba from whom Rs 1,15,000 were received and ordered to be spent on artillery and for charity.

7. Who this rich 'pagan' was is not known to history. Sikh histories mention the name of one Chandu of Lahore having been responsible for the tortures inflicted upon the Guru. Whether he was the

affair the rich man was disappointed. He brought what 'his Pope' had in his house, including the household furniture, also the clothes of his wife and children, and finding that all he had was not enough to cover up the fine, since the pagans have no respect to their Pope or their father, besides depriving him of all his money, he tormented the saint with new insults every day. The poor saint even received kicks on his face on many occasions and was prevented from eating till he had paid more money.

The rich man did not believe that he had no money, though he had absolutely nothing and no one was even willing to give him. Thus having suffered so many injuries, pains and insults, given by the same that were adoring him, the poor Guru died.

The surety-giver wanted to escape but was made a prisoner and killed after all his possessions had been confiscated. ?

MASSACRE OF THE SIKHS AT DELHI IN 1716

John Surman and Edward Stephenson

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The paragraph which refers to the arrest and massacre of the Sikhs at Delhi in 1716 is extracted from a letter dated Delhi, March 10, 1716, written by Messrs. John Surman and Edward Stephenson to the Hon'ble Robert Hedges, President and Governor of Fort William, etc., Council in Bengal. These gentlemen and their Secretary, Hugh Barker, were then present in the Mughal capital as ambassadors of the East India Company's Council in Bengal to the Court of Emperor Farrukh-Siyar. Under instructions of their principals, the ambassadors maintained a regular Diary of the events and transactions at the royal court, and wrote to Calcutta to keep the headquarters informed of the political and other developments there. This letter of March 10, 1716, was read at a consultation at Fort St. George on Tuesday, 5th June, 1716, and is to be found in the Madras Diary and Consultation Book for 1715 to 1719, No. 87, Range 237, in the India Office (now Commonwealth Relations Office), London. It is also reproduced in C. R. Wilson's *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, volume II, part II (Calcutta, 1911), pp. 96-98, and in J. T. Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*, p. 180.

surety-giver mentioned by Fr. Xavier is not certain. This man, according to the *Padre's* letter, wanted to escape after the Guru's death, 'but was made a prisoner and killed.' This must have happened immediately after the Guru's death or within four months, at any rate before September 25, 1606, the date of Fr. Xavier's letter. Chandu, however, is said to have met almost a similar fate, but after the release of Guru Hargobind, son of Guru Arjun, from the fort of Gwalior where he was kept as a prisoner for at least twelve months. According to Muhsin Fani's *Dabistan-i- Mazahib* Guru Hargobind remained there for twelve years. This is, however, incorrect. The exact period has yet to be determined.

The chief of the Sikhs, Banda Singh, referred to in the letter as 'the great Rebel Gooroo', was originally an ascetic *sadhu* of the *hairagi* order. He was initiated into the Sikh order of the *Khalsa* in September 1708 by Guru Gobind Singh at Nander in the Deccan where he had gone in connection with the negotiations that had been going on with Emperor Bahadur Shah (1707-12) since July 1707. There the Guru was stabbed by a Pathan from Sirhind in the last week of September 1708, and he died of his wound on October 6-7. The line of the Sikh Gurus that had begun with Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikh religion, came to an end with the tenth and the last Guru Gobind Singh who bequeathed spiritual heritage of Sikhism to the Sikh holy book, *Guru Granth Sahib*, and the temporal leadership of the Sikhs to the general body of the *Khalsa*.

Before the death of the Guru, however, Banda Singh, with the renewed zeal and vigour of a new convert, had left for the Panjab, not as Guru of the Sikhs but as commander of the forces of the *Khalsa*. Here the Sikhs gathered round him in large numbers and in the summer of 1710 he was soon able to carve out a small Sikh kingdom which, later, paved the way for the freedom of the country from under the Mughal yoke. But the Mughal empire was too strong for the infant power of the Sikhs under Banda Singh. He was captured in December 1715, during the reign of Emperor Farrukh-Siyar, under whose orders he was carried to Delhi as a prisoner along with 694 other Sikhs. Here they were all, with exception of Banda Singh and a few chosen leaders, executed in the *maidan* opposite the Chandni Chauk *Kotwali* at the rate of a hundred a day beginning on March 5, 1716. The turn of Banda Singh himself and his associates came three months later on June 9, when he was taken out to the Qutb Minar and torn to pieces near the tomb of Emperor Bahadur Shah.

C. R. Wilson, the author of the *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, has given in the volume II, part II, pp. xlii-xliii, the following description of the entry of Banda Singh and his fellow captives into Delhi on February 27, 1716, based on the articles of William Irvine on the *Political History of the Sikhs* (*Asiatic Quarterly*, January 1894, pp. 420-31) and *Guru Gobind Singh and Banda* (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* for 1894, part I, pp. 112-43). He says :

The ceremonial on this occasion was copied from that observed after the capture of the Maratha Sambhaji. Malice did its utmost to cover the vanquished with ridicule and shame. First came the heads of the executed Sikhs, stuffed with straw, and stuck on bamboos, their long hair streaming in the wind like a veil, and along with them to show that every living creature in Gurdaspore had perished, a dead cat on a pole.

The teacher himself, dressed out of mockery in a turban of red cloth, embroidered with gold, and a heavy robe of brocade, flowered with pomegranates, sat in an iron cage, placed on the back of an elephant. Behind him stood a mail-clad officer, with a drawn sword. After him came the other prisoners, seven hundred and forty in number, seated two and two upon camels without saddles. Each wore a high fool's cap of sheepskin and had one hand pinned to his neck, between two pieces of wood. Many were also dressed in sheep skins with wooly side turned outwards. At the end of the procession rode three great nobles, Muhammad Amin Khan, sent by the emperor to bring in the prisoners, [from Agharabad to the Lahori gate of the palace] Kamr-ud-Din, his son, and Zakariya Khan, his son-in-law, who being

also the son of Abd-us-Samad Khan had been deputed to represent his father at the ceremony. The road to the palace, for several miles, was lined with troops and filled with exultant crowds, who mocked at the teacher and laughed at the grotesque appearance of his followers. They wagged their heads and pointed the finger of scorn at the poor wretched as they passed. 'Hu ! Hu !, infidel dog-worshippers, your day has come. Truly retribution follows on transgression, as wheat springs from wheat, and barley from barley.' Yet the triumph could not have seemed complete. Not all the insults that their enemies had invented could rob the teacher and his followers of their dignity. Without any sign of dejection or shame, they rode on, calm, cheerful, even anxious to die the death of martyrs.

Life was promised to any who would renounce their faith, but they would not prove false to their Guru, and at the place of suffering their constancy was wonderful to look at. 'Me, deliverer, kill me first' was the prayer which constantly rang in the ears of the executioner. One there was, a youngman, an only son, whose widow mother had made many applications to the Mughal officers, declaring that her son was a Sikh prisoner, and no follower of the Guru. A release was granted and she hastened to the prison-house to claim her son. But the boy turned from her to meet his doom crying, 'I know not this woman. What does she want with me? I am a true and loyal follower of the Guru.' For a whole week the sword of the executioner did its butcher's work. Every day a hundred brave men perished and at night the headless bodies were loaded into carts, taken out of the city, and hung upon trees. It was not till June 19 [Sunday, the 29th Jamadi-ul-Aakhir, 1128 A.H., June 9, 1716 O.S.] that Banda himself was led out to execution, all efforts having failed to buy him off. They dressed him, as on the day of his entry, set him again on an elephant, and took him away to the old city, where the red Qutb Minar lifts its proud head of white marble over the crumbling walls of the Hindu fortress. Here they paraded him round the tomb of the late emperor, Bahadur Shah, and put him to a barbarous death. First they made him dismount, placed his child in his arms and bade him kill it. Then, as he shrank with horror from the act, they ripped open the child before its father's eyes, thrust its quivering flesh into his mouth and hacked him to pieces limb by limb.

The authors of the despatch John Surman and Edward Stephenson (and their Secretary, Hugh Barker) were, evidently, eyewitnesses of the dreadful massacre of the Sikhs at Delhi in March recorded by them. The executions began on March 5, five days before the date of the despatch, March 10, when a few hundred Sikhs had yet to be executed. This paragraph of the despatch, therefore, is of great historical value to the students and scholars of history. The last sentence regarding the unflinching devotion of the Sikhs to their faith under the severest of trials is very significant.

Except for the number of the Sikh prisoners, which Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan gives as 694 in his *Tazkirat-us-Salatin*, the despatch of the English ambassadors is in full agreement with the writings of the other eye-witnesses and contemporaries. The reader interested in futher study of the exploits and achievements of Banda Singh is referred to *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur* published in 1935, and the bibliography appended to it.

GANDA SINGH

LETTER XII

The Honourable Robert Hedges Esq.,
President & Governor of Fort William, & Council in Bengal.
Honourable Sirs, etc.,

We wrote your Honour on the 7th ultimo since which we have received no letters.

...

The great Rebel Gooroo [Banda Singh] who has been for these 20 years so troublesome in the Subaship [*suba*] of Lahore is at length taken with all his family and attendance by Abd-us-Samad Cawn the Suba [*subedar*, i. e., Governor] of that province. Some days ago they entered the city laden with fetters, his whole attendants which were left alive being about seven hundred and eighty all severally mounted on camels which were sent out of the City for that purpose, besides about two thousand heads stuck upon poles, being those who died by the sword in battle. He was carried into the presence of the King, and from thence to a close prison. He at present has his life prolonged with most of his *mutsuddys* in the hope to get an Account of his treasure in the several parts of his Kingdom, and of those that assisted him, when afterwards he will be executed, for the rest there are 100 each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not beed found that one apostatised from his new formed Religion.

...

Dilly,
March the 10th, 1716.

We are,
Honourable Sir & Sirs,
Your most obedient humble servants,
John Surman,
Edward Stephenson.

Cojee Seerhaud assenting.
Hugh Barker, Secretary.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SIKHS

by

Colonel A. L. H. Polier

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Colonel Polier's *The Siques* is the first known connected account of the Sikh people written by a European. According to internal evidence provided by references to Mirza Najjaf Khan's hostilities against the Macheri chief (Rao Raja Partap Singh) in 1779-80, the death of Ahmad Shah Durrani (on the night of October 16-17, 1772) 'which had happened about eight or nine years ago', and the conquest of Multan from the Sikhs by Taimur Shah Durrani in February 1780,¹ this paper was written in 1780 (see footnotes 24 and 35). Some eight years later, it was read at a meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (now the Asiatic Society) at Calcutta on December 20, 1787. No copy of it seems to have been left with the office of the Society, nor was it published in the Society's *Journal*. The present copy has been obtained from the India Office Library, London (Orme MS., XIX, pp. 73-83), and I am thankful to its Librarian for his courtesy in arranging to let me have a photostat copy.

Antoine Louis Henri Polier, as that was the full name of Colonel Polier, was a Swiss engineer, nephew of Paul Phillip Polier, the Commandant of Fort St. George (Madras). He entered the service of the East India Company in 1757 and arrived in India in 1758. Having for some time served in Madras and Behar, he was appointed Assistant Engineer at Calcutta with the rank of Captain in the army. His work in the construction of Fort William was highly appreciated by all competent authorities. But as a non-Englishman, he found his way barred to promotion higher than Major. He, therefore, gladly accepted the offer of deputation with Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Oudh. But he soon became the victim of the hostilities of the enemies of Warren Hastings and had to resign his job in 1775. His straitened financial circumstances, however, compelled him to seek employment again and he was readmitted into the Company's service in April, 1782, as a Lieutenant-Colonel and was stationed at Lucknow. In 1789 he finally retired from service, returned to Europe and settled down near Avignon in France. There he was murdered by robbers (or revolutionaries) on February 9, 1795.

Oudh in the eighteenth century was the land of art and literature and its capital, Lucknow, was the centre of educational and cultural institutions. Here Colonel Polier came into contact with men of learning and became interested in the history and religions of India. He collected quite a large number of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic manuscripts

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, iii, 163-70; Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, 411; and *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, v (No. 1843), 438.

and he was the first European to secure a complete set of the Vedas which, along with some Persian manuscripts, he presented to the British Museum, London. The Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris possesses a number of his manuscripts, and the Bibliotheque Cantonale of Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland, 'contains a manuscript catalogue of 120 Oriental works with annotations by Polier'. The Khudabakhsh Oriental Public Library, Bankipore, Patna, is also said to have a manuscript bearing Polier's name-stamp. The Pote Collection at Eton College (England) was mainly made by him.

Polier was one of the earliest members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, elected on January 29, 1784. He took quite a keen interest in the advancement of the object of the Society and, among other things, communicated to it a paper written by Dr. John Williams (read on February 9, 1787). His own paper on *The Siques or History of the Seeks* was read on December 20, 1787, and another on *The Distillation of Roses as Practised in Insin* and a *Translation of the Inscriptions on Pillars in Feroj Shah Kotla* were read on March 27, 1788. His *Mythologie des Indous* was published posthumously in 1809.

The above information about Colonel Polier is based on Dr. Pratul C. Gupta's *Introduction to Polier's Shah Allam II and His Court* (Calcutta, 1947), Hodson's *Officers of the Bengal Army* (Part III, L-R) and Buckland's *Dictionary of Indian Biography*. For further details, the inquisitive reader is referred to the *Secret and Public Consultations* in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, the National Archives' *Calendars of Persian Correspondence*, Davies' *Warren Hastings and Oude, Selections from the State Papers of the Governor-General of India* (Warren Hastings), *Bengal, Past and Present*, 1910, 1914, etc., etc.

Polier's paper on *The Siques* is evidently based on casual information collected by him during his deputation with Shuja-ud-Daula and the years following his resignation when he occasionally came into contact with them in the neighbourhood of Delhi and heard a good deal about them in connection with their relations with the Imperialists of Delhi and the Ruhilas, the Jats, the Rajputs and the Marathas. It contains a number of factual mistakes which are not uncommon to foreign writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when, for want of close personal contact, they did not have first-hand knowledge of history and institutions of the Sikhs, nor, in the absence of authoritative literature and original documents, could they have reliable sources for their studies. Added to this, Polier had his own prejudices against the Sikhs impressed upon his mind by the repeated one-sided reports of the Mughal officials against whom they had been struggling for over eighty years. He, therefore, readily believed whatever information was given to him at the time he wrote his paper. All these I have tried to correct in the footnotes, in the light of empirical knowledge and reliable material that have now become available.

I have also appended, under II and III, *An Extract from a letter of Major Polier* written from Delhi on May 22, 1776, to Colonel Ironside at Belgram, and a note on the *Character of the Sieks* (from the observations of Colonel Polier and Mr. George Forster) culled from *The Asiatic Annual Register* for the year 1800 (London, 1801, pp. 32-35) and 1802 (London, 1803, pp. 9-12), respectively.

The letter to Colonel Ironside was written by Polier some eleven years before he read his paper, and the views and impressions expressed therein do not seem to have undergone much change. The writer of the *Character of the Sieks* seems to have studied the observations of both Colonel Polier and George Forster. Forster was a civil servant on the Madras establishment of the East India Company. He was a man of adventure and he left Calcutta on May 23, 1782, on his long and arduous overland journey to England and passed through the north-eastern hilly tracts of the Punjab in February, March and April, 1783. He was a keen observer of men and things and he has recorded his impressions and the information collected during the journey in a series of letters published in 1798 under the title of *A Journey from Bengal to England*. Although, in his own words, Forster was under 'great obligations to Colonel Polier ... for having furnished me with large historical tracts of the Siques', he had 'no tendency to discolour or misrepresent truth', as it appeared to him. 'Guided by no views of interest nor impressed by any frown of power, I was enabled', he says, 'to examine the objects that came before me through a dispassionate medium'. And he has succeeded in it to a very great extent. He has devoted his Letter XI, pp. 253-95, to the history and religion of the Sikhs, in addition to occasional references to them in other letters, *vide i*, 128-30, 198-99, 227-28 and *ii*, 83, 88

GANDA SINGH

THE SIQUES

The Siques date the origin of their sect as far back as the reign of Ackbar, at which time lived in the environs of Lahore a reputed saint named *Gorou Nanak*.¹ (In their language, *gorou* signifies master or leader, and *Sique* a disciple). This man had many followers, who embraced his doctrine, and acknowledged him as the head of a new sect, which, however, during that reign and the three succeeding ones did not increase much, or at least never attempted to rise against the lawful authority. It was not till the reign of Bahaudur Shah that they began to appear in arms² and endeavoured to shake off their allegiance, at which time under the direction of a new saint, one Gorou Govind,³ they laid the foundation of a kind of republic, which might prove very for-

1 The Sikhs trace their origin not to the days of the great Mughal Akbar, but to those of the Lodhis. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was born in 1469 during the reign of the first Lodhi king, Bahol Khan (1450-1488), and died in 1539 during the days of the second Mughal Emperor Humayun (1530-1540). *Sique*, *Siek* or *Sikh* is the Panjabi form of the Sanskrit *śisya*, meaning a disciple.

2 The first person to appear in arms was the Sixth Guru Hargobind (1606-1644) during the reigns of Emperors Jehangir (1605-1627) and Shah Jahan (1627-1658).

3 Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Guru (1675-1708), instituted the baptismal rite, *Khandé dā Amrit*, on March 30, 1699, and created the order of baptized Sikhs or *Singhs*, known as the *Khalsa*, which became the basis of the Sikh republics (*misals*) established by the Sikh *misaldar* Sardars.

midable to its neighbours, and overwhelm them in the end, did not at the same time their disunion, intestine divisions of jealousies prevent them from extending their power so far as they might otherwise.

Originally and in general the Siques are zemindars or cultivators of land, and of that tribe called Jatts which, in this part of India, are reckoned the best and most laborious tillers, though at the same time they are also noted for being of an unquiet and turbulent disposition. This tribe of the *Jatts*, one of the lowest amongst the Hindoos, is very numerous and dispersed in all the country from the *Attek* or the Sind to the southward far beyond Agra ; and though in that extent, it be intermixed with some others, nevertheless, in those provinces, it is by far the most considerable tribe.

The troubles and rebellions, which disturbed the empire during the tumultuous reign of *Bahadur Shah*, gave the Siques an opportunity of rising in arms, and shaking off the royal authority ; this, however, they did by degrees ; they fortified themselves at a place called *Ramrowny*,⁴ about 20 cosses this side of Lahore, and there established their principal place of worship, which is at a large tank called *Ambar Sar*,⁵ or *Chak*.⁶

The Siques then began to increase greatly in number, many proselytes were made, some from fear, others from a love of novelty and independence ; all that came, though from the lowest and most abject castes, were received, contrary to the Hindoo customs which admit of no change of caste, and even Musulmen were in the number of the converts. The fame of *Gorou Govind*,⁷ who then made his appearance and of whom many prodigies were related, contributed greatly to establish this sect. This reputed saint soon found himself at the head of a numerous force, and began to make excursions and converts, sword in hand. He exerted himself so successfully, that at last he drew the attention of Government towards him. Farockseer⁸ was then on the throne. An army was formed in or about 1715 under the command of Abdul Semad Khan Subadar

⁴ Ramrowny is a compound of two words 'Rām' and *rāonī*. *Rāonī* literally means an encloser ; and the walled enclosure raised by the Sikhs at Amritsar near their temple in April 1748 was named the Rām-Rāonī after the fourth Guru Rāmdās, the founder of Amritsar.

⁵ Amritsar, the principal place of Sikh worship, was not established at Rām-Rāonī, but, in fact, Rām-Rāonī was established near the Sikh place of worship at Amritsar (called Ambarsar by illiterate people) which had been founded by Guru Rāmdās in 1574, one hundred and seventy-four years before the Rām-Rāonī came into existence.

⁶ *Chak*, *Chah-Guru* or *Chak Guru Rām-dās*, was the original name of the city of Amritsar.

⁷ Here Colonel Polier, like many other writers before and after him, has confused Bandā Singh, a disciple of the Guru, with Guru Gobind Singh. Originally a *Bairāgī Sādhu*, Bandā Singh was converted to Sikhism by the Guru at Nander (Deccan) in September 1708, and was sent to the Punjab to lead the Sikhs in military expeditions. He arrived in the Punjab in 1709 and conquered the province of Sirhind in the battle of Chappar Chiri on May 12, 1710 (Rabi-ul-Awwal 24, 1122 A.H.).

⁸ It was during the reign of Emperor Bahadur Shah (1707-1712) that an army was first sent against Bandā Singh who had then to seek shelter to the Shivalik hills in December 1710. The campaign of Abdus-Samad Khan in 1715 during the reign of Farrukh-Siyar was the last one against Bandā Singh.

of Lahore, and he had orders to exterminate the sect. It was not an easy task, however, after many marches and pursuits he came up with their main body, which he totally defeated. He had even the good luck to take *Gorou Govind*⁹ himself prisoner. The Gorou was sent to Delhi, shut up in an iron cage, and afterwards put to death,¹⁰ and his disciples, wherever they were caught, were, on their refusal of turning Mohammedans, immediately executed.¹¹ The chase became so hot after them, and was carried on with so much spirit, and so unrelenting a vigour, that the very name seemed extinct, and those few who still remained, were obliged by shaving off their beard, and hair, to deny their sect and leader.¹² After him for many years no more mention is made of the Siques, and it was not until some time after Nadir Shah's invasion that they began to show their head again. However, the gallant Mir Mannou, then Subadar of the provinces of Lahore and Multan, attacked them briskly, and gave them little time to get strength ; indeed he might have crushed them entirely, had he not at the instigation of *Coraumul*, his Naib or Deputy in the Subadary of Multan, accepted a sum of money¹³ to save their capital Ramrowny which he had surrounded and was on the point of taking. This false step *Coraumul* engaged him to take to lessen the merit, it is said, of *Adina Beg Khan*, a brave and valiant officer (in whom Mir Mannou placed great confidence) who had conducted the expedition against the Siques, and who of course must have gained much glory

9 This was Bandā Singh and not Guru Gobind Singh. The latter died at Nander on October 7, 1708.

10 Bandā Singh was done to death at Delhi on June 9, 1716 (Jamadi-ul-Akhir 29, 1128 A.H.) near the shrine of Khwaja Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki.

11 This evidently refers to the edicts issued by Emperor Bahadur Shah (1707-12) and Farrukh-Siyar (1713-19) ordering wholesale massacre of the Sikhs. In the fourth year of his reign (A.D. 1710), Bahadur Shah ordered *Bakhshi-ul-Mumalik* Mahabat Khan on Shawwl 29 (December 10) to write to the *faujdars* of the territories of Shahjahanabad to kill the Sikhs wherever found—*Nānak-prastān rā har-jā kih ba-yāband ba-qatl rasānand* (*Akbār-i-Darbār-i-Muallā*). This order was repeated soon after execution of Bandā Singh during the reign of Farrukh-Siyar saying : 'wherever found, the followers of this sect should be unhesitatingly killed' (*Miftāh-ut-Tawārikh*, p. 398).

12. There is not a single instance on record to say that any Sikh during this period of persecution shaved off his head or beard or abjured his faith to save his life. The observations of the agents of the East India Company, John Surman and Edward Stephenson, in their letter XII of March 10, 1716, addressed to the President and Governor of Fort William and Council in Bengal, regarding the execution of about 780 Sikh companions of Bandā Singh at Delhi are very significant. The letter says : "There are one hundred each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one has apostatized from the new formed religion." (Wheeler, *Early Records of British India*, 180).

13 Kaura Mall helped the Sikhs during the governorship of Mir Mannu (April 1748 to November 1753) not for having 'accepted a sum of money', but because he was a Sikh himself, though not a baptized *Singh*. According to George Forster 'the preservation of the Siques from the effect of Meer Munno's success appears to have been largely promoted by the interference of his minister Korah Mul, who, being himself a Sique, naturally became a trusty advocate of the sect'. (*A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, 284-85 ; 272-73).

had they been entirely reduced.¹⁴ However, from whatever motives it might be, the Siques escaped total destruction ; they paid largely for it and Mir Mannou who had other work on his hand was no sooner at a distance, than they began to strengthen themselves anew. It is true, for some time and while *Coraumul* lived, they were by his influence over them kept in tolerable order and obliged to remain quiet, and moreover Mir Mannou's orders to convert them to Musulmanism or destroy them, wherever they could be found strolling in arms, were also during his life strictly and vigorously executed.

But the anarchy and confusion which ensued after Mir Mannou's death¹⁵ in the provinces of Lahore and Multan, from the different competitors for the Subadary, and the intrigues of his widow, who wanted to retain the Government in her hands and actually was for a considerable time in possession of it, prevented that attention from being paid to the Siques, which their spirit and rebellious principles required. It was then they began to grow formidable and to assume a real independence. They formed themselves into a kind of republic and in the course of a few years possessed themselves of the full Government of the province of Lahore and Multan.¹⁶

About that time they attracted the notice of Ahmad Shah *Abdally*, the *Durany* king,¹⁷ whose Country extends to the River Attek, the northern boundary of the Subah of Lahore. Those Duranys are very strict Musulmen ; though at the same time, perhaps, the most lawless bloody-minded barbarians on the face of the earth. They saw with rage the progress of the Siques and particularly the manner in which they proceeded towards the Islam or Mohammedan Religion.¹⁸ For the Siques not only destroyed

14 In fact the siege of Rām-Rāoni was raised in the interests of the government of Mir Mannu himself to secure neutrality of the Sikhs at a time when Ahmed Shah Durrani was invading India (in fact, the Panjab) for the second time in November 1748. As a result of the compromise, ten thousand Sikhs, under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Shluwalia, helped Kaura Mall win the final battle (October 1749) against Shah Nawaz Khan in the conquest of the province of Multan. (Sanda Singh, *Mahārājā Kaurā Mall Bahādur*, 73-82).

15 Mir Mannu died on November 4, 1753 (Muharrum 7, 1167 A.H.)

16 Lahore was conquered by the Sikhs in April 1765 while Multan had been overrun by them in the summer of 1764. (Qazi Nur Muhammed, *Jang Nāmāh*, 38, 41 ; Ganda Singh, *Ahmed Shah Durrani* 308-09).

17 The Sikhs had attracted the attention of Ahmed Shah Durrani in January 1752 when the Shah invaded India for the third time. In March 1758 the Sikhs and the Marathas drove out of Sirhind the Durrani governor, Abdus-Samad Khan, and a month later, they occupied Lahore, driving out Timur Shah, the son of Ahmed Shah.

18 The Sikhs never entertained any enmity against Islam or Mohammedans as such. To begin with, they had to fight against the tyranny of the Mughal rulers who happened to be Mohammedans, and later on to free their country from the clutches of the Afghans—also Mohammedans—who invaded India and wished to annex the Panjab to their dominions. If, at any time, Muslim mosques came to be attacked by them, it was because they were the centres and headquarters of *Jehād* (religious war) against the Sikhs in those days. Otherwise, there are instances of the Sikh Gurus and sardars building mosques for their Muslim friends and subjects. There might have been some cases, though very rare, of mosques having been desecrated in retaliation for the desecration or demolition of Sikh places of worship by Mohammedans.

the mosques and profaned the places of worship, but also compelled many Musulmen to embrace their sect, which boasts of violent hatred to that of Mohammed. The Siques besides had at different times, while *Ahmed Shah Abdally* passed through their country in his excursions towards Indostan, severely molested him in his marches, and never failed cutting off his straggling parties, and laying hold of every opportunity of distressing him. All those reasons engaged *Ahmed Shah* to think of chastising them in earnest. He was then, by having jointly with all the Mohammedan Amrahs of this part of Indostan defeated the Mahrattas,¹⁹ and drove them away to the Deccan, at liberty to turn his arms towards them ; accordingly he entered their country with a powerful army. The Siques were in no shape able to face him ; they were defeated wherever they presented themselves, and pursued with all the violence and spirit of religious enthusiasm.²⁰ They were forced to fly with their effects, families and cattle into the jungles and impervious woods with which the country abounds, and to abandon all the rest to the Duranys.²¹ They, however, still hovered round them at some distance with their cavalry and lost no opportunity of cutting off their stragglers and otherwise distressing them. *Ahmed Shah Abdally*, in the meantime, took their famous place of worship, which was immediately razed to the ground.²² The holy tank was filled up, and a price set on the Siques. Many pyramids were made of their heads, both at Lahore and other places, and in short it is certain that had *Ahmed Shah Abdally* remained three or four years in those parts, the sect would have been at an end though perhaps the country would have been depopulated by it, so very keen were the Duranies in their pursuit of them. Ahmed Shah, however desirous he might be to retain those fine provinces in his possession, could not, it seems, spare so much time to reduce them effectually. The vast extent of his dominions which extended from the Caspian Sea to the Gulf of Sind (and to which he had no other right but from his sword and good fortune), joined to his long absence from home, made it necessary for him to return to quell some revolts which threatened his upper provinces. He therefore contented himself with appointing different Governors to rule the country, and having left a garrison of 4,000 or 5,000 men in Lahore he recrossed the Attek and continued his march towards Balk where some chiefs had thrown off their allegiance. The Siques immediately began to avail themselves of his absence, which many circumstances rendered much longer than he at first intended. They rose in arms everywhere and fell on the Duranies on all sides. They surrounded Lahore and after some time obliged the garrison to surrender at discretion.²³ They now retorted amply on the

¹⁹ This evidently refers to the battle of Panipat fought on January 14, 1761.

²⁰ This took place on February 5, 1762, when the Sikhs suffered a very heavy loss of over ten thousand lives in a day. This disastrous calamity is known among the Sikhs as *Waddā Ghalūghārā* or the Great Holocaust.

²¹ This sentence is suggestive of a saying common among the people of these days :

What we eat and drink is ours ;

What remains belongs to Ahmad Shah.

²² This refers to the Sikh temple Darbār Sāhib at Amritsar, now known as the Golden Temple, which was blown up with gun-powder by Ahmad Shah Durrani on April 10, 1762.

²³ Lahore was finally occupied by the Sikhs on April 16, 1765. Kabuli Mall was then the Governor

Duranies. The mosques which had been rebuilt were demolished with every mark of indignity and washed with hog's blood. The Duranies were forced with their own hands to dig and restore the famous tank of *Ambar Sar*, which was soon brought to its ancient state and newly adorned with buildings. In short the Siques were now absolute masters, and having fully established their religion and national councils, they began to extend themselves to the southward and westward amongst their neighbours, most of whom they brought under contribution. From that time till *Ahmed Shah Abdally's* death,²⁴ which happened about eight or nine years ago, the Siques had several times to encounter with his forces, but Ahmed Shah never had it in his power to spare so much time as was necessary to reduce them completely, and was soon forced to relinquish that object.

Since his death and the accession of Timur Shah, his son, the Siques have been but little molested from that quarter. They have even been emboldened to take from him the city of Multan, which they possessed some time; though they have been forced to relinquish it lately,²⁴ they have nevertheless retained the greatest part of that Subah, and *Timur Shah* seems either too indolent, or too much employed at home, to think of beginning a contest with them in earnest.

Such has been the rise and progress of the Siques to this day which must be attributed, not so much to their bravery, conduct or military knowledge, as to the anarchy and confusion that has desolated the empire, one may say, for these 60 or 70 years past, that is, ever since the death of that great Aurangzeb but more particularly from the weak government during the reigns of *Mahomed Shah*, *Ahmed Shah* and *Allumguir Sany*, the last of which may be cited as an example of the weakest and most wretched that ever was.

In their military capacity the Siques are far from being so formidable as they are generally represented, or as they might be. It is true they are in general exceedingly well mounted, that their horses and themselves will undergo much fatigues, and perform very expeditious marches, and that they have excellent matchlocks which carry a good way and which they manage on horse-back with tolerable execution; all that must be allowed them, and also that they are very abstemious and satisfied with what no other horsemen in India perhaps would put up with; but when it is considered in what disorderly manner they fight, that they know not what it is to be in close order, or to charge sword in hand, and that they never could yet be brought to face the Duranies, though 3 or 4 to 1,²⁵ it

of the province on behalf of Ahmad Shah and his nephew Amir Singh, in the absence of the Governor at Jammu, was compelled to surrender to the Sikhs.

²⁴ Ahmad Shah Durrani died on Rajjab 20, 1186 A.H., October 16-17, 1772. And Timur Shah conquered Multan from the Sikhs in February 1780. These references also help determine the date of the composition of this paper in the year 1780 as mentioned in footnote 35.

²⁵ Colonel Polier seems to have been misinformed about the military skill and prowess of the Sikhs. The inquisitive reader is referred to Qaazi Nur Muhammad's *Jang Nāmāh* wherein the author has devoted section XLI to the 'Bravery of the Sikhs'. The Qazi had come to India along with the army of anti-Sikh Baluch crusaders during the seventh Indian invasion (1764-65) of Ahmad Shah Durrani and was an eye-witness of all that he has recorded in the *Jang Nāmāh*.

must be acknowledged that at best they are but the *Croates* of India, and indeed they resemble them very much in more than one point.

As for the Government of the Siques, it is properly an aristocracy, in which no pre-eminence is allowed except that which power and force naturally gives, otherwise all the chiefs, great or small, and even the poorest and most abject Siques, look on themselves as perfectly equal in all the public concerns and in the greatest Council or *Goormotta*²⁶ of the nation, held annually either at *Ambarsar*, *Lahore* or some other place. Everything is decided by the plurality of votes taken indifferently from all who choose to be present at it. In this Council or Diet all the public affairs are debated, such as alliances, wars and the excursions intended to be made in the ensuing year. The contributions collected in the last expeditions are also duly accounted for and distributed among the chiefs in proportion to their forces, who, on their side, must take care to satisfy their dependants in their full proportion, who would, was it otherwise, soon quit them and address themselves to others. The chiefs are extremely numerous and some of them have at their command as far as 10,000 or 12,000 horses ; however, they generally are very inferior ; many have only 15 or 20 horses, and from that number up to 1,000 or 2,000. It is computed that their whole force, if joined together, would amount to nearly 200,000 horses, a power which would be truly formidable, did it act under one chief or one order. But divided as it is amongst 400 or 500 chiefs who all look on themselves as independent of each other, whose interests and views are almost all different, and perpetually jarring, it is much weakened thereby. It is true, in case of an invasion or foreign attack, they are bound to support one another as much as lays in their power, however, the spirit of independence is such that it is not without difficulty they can be prevailed on to act in concert, even for the public good. For in the war against *Ahmed Shah Abdally* it was but seldom that a greater force than 60,000 men could be brought together to oppose him ; though certainly the occasion called for their most strenuous exertions ; but in such times those only present themselves who have a great deal to lose. When out of their country, the Siques will indifferently fight for whoever pays them best, and their chiefs will engage some on each side of the question without the smallest hesitation or scruple. But when they are not retained in service, or are unemployed at home in disputes amongst themselves, they, particularly those on the borders, set off generally after the rains and make excursions in bodies of 10,000 horses or more on the neighbours. They plunder all they can lay their hands on, burn the towns and villages and do infinite mischief.²⁷ It is true they seldom kill in cold blood or make slaves ;

26 *Gurmatā* (*Gur-matā*) is, in fact, a resolution, a *matā*, passed in a council of the Sikhs in the presence of the *Guru* (*Granth Sāhib*). It has at times been taken to mean a council (an assembly) of the Sikhs instead of a counsel.

27 During their incursions the Sikh sardars attacked either the territories of the Mughal or of the Ruhilas. The object was to rob the Mughal rulers of their harmful political power, and to so weaken them as to render them incapable of tyrannizing over their subjects, particularly the Sikhs themselves, who had suffered heavy persecution at their hands for about a hundred and fifty years beginning with

however, when they meet with handsome male children and robustly made, they carry them away and adopt them. The cattle is their principal aim ; they carry them off in vast numbers and send them into their own country depriving by that means the wretched labourer and husbandman from the capacity of doing anything for himself afterwards. Thus they ruin and depopulate the finest provinces. To obviate those evils there is no other way except agreeing with one of their chiefs for a certain yearly tribute which they call *rācky*,²⁸ in general a trifle will satisfy them, from two to five per cent on the revenues, particularly if at a distance ; and provided this is regularly paid, it is said no further hindrance or molestation will be received from them. On the contrary the chief, to whom the tribute or *rācky* is paid, takes the district under his protection and is ready to fight against any of brethren who might think of disturbing it. This method has been adopted by most of the zemindars bordering on them, who at the same time not to trust implicitly to the good faith of those freebooters have taken care to fortify their towns and put themselves on a defensive footing ; without that, whole provinces would be a desert. The Siques possess an immediate tract of country, the whole *soubah* of Lahore, the greatest part of that of Multan and part of that of Delhi, including all the country called *Panjab*. They also carry their excursions through every part of the last *soubah*, and through part of that of Agra. Their own immediate possessions are exceedingly well cultivated, populous and rich ; the revenues in general taken in kind throughout and not in money, which is very favourable to the tiller. In short few countries can vie with theirs, particularly in this part of India.

The Siques are in general strong and well made, accustomed from their infancy to the most laborious life and the hardest fare ; they make marches and undergo fatigues that will appear really astonishing. In their excursions they carry no tents or baggage with them, except perhaps a small tent for the principal chief ; the rest shelter themselves under a blanket which serves them also in the cold weather, to wrap themselves in and which in a march covers their saddles. They have mostly two horses apiece, and some three ; their horses are middle sized, but exceedingly good, strong and high spirited, and mild tempered. The provinces of Lahore and Multan, noted for producing the best horses in Indostan, supply them amply and indeed they take the greatest care to increase

the martyrdom of Guru Arjun in 1606, during the reign of Jehangir, to 1753 when a Mughal Governor of Lahore, Mir Mannu, sent out moving columns to exterminate them wherever found.

The Ruhilas to the east of the River Jamuna were the chief Indian allies of the Afghan invaders who were responsible for so much of misery brought upon the people of the Panjab. Their harassment by the Sikhs, therefore, indirectly contributed to the weakness of Ahmad Shah Durrani by distracting and diverting the support in men and munitions that would otherwise flow into the Afghan army to be more harmful to this country.

If the Sikhs had not incessantly carried on their struggle against the Mughals and hampered the progress of Afghan domination in northern India, the Panjab could not have been freed from under their crushing yokes.

28 The word *rācky* or *rākhī* literally means protection, and was correctly applied to the tribute received by the Sikhs for the protection from external aggression guaranteed by them to the people paying it.

their numbers by all means in their power ; and though they make merry on the demise of one of their brethren,²⁹ they condole and lament the death of a horse, thus shewing their value for an animal so necessary to them in their excursions.

As for the food of the Siques, it is the coarsest, and such as the poorest people in Hindostan use from necessity. Bread baked in ashes, soaked afterwards in a mash made of different kinds of pulse, is their best dish, and such as they seldom indulge themselves with, except when at full leisure ; otherwise notches or grains hastily parched are all they care for. They abhor smoking of tobacco, for what reason I cannot find, but intoxicate themselves freely either with spirits or *bang* ; a cup of the last they seldom fail taking at night after a fatigue. Their dress is extremely scanty, a pair of blue drawers, a kind of chequered plaid worn partly round the middle and partly over the shoulder with a mean blue turban forms all their equipage. Their chiefs are distinguished by having some heavy gold bracelets on their wrists and sometimes a chain of the same metal round their turbans and by being mounted on better horses, otherwise no distinction appears amongst them.

The sect of the Siques has a strong taint of the Gento³⁰ religion ; they venerate the cow, and abstain piously from killing or feeding on it, and they also pay some respect to the *devtās* or idols. But their great object of worship is with them their own saints, or those whom they have honoured with the name of *Gorou*. Those they invoke continually, and they seem to look on them as everything. *Wah-Gorou* repeated several times is their only symbol, from which the Musulmen have (not without reason) taxed them with being downright atheists.³¹ Their mode of initiating their converts is by making them drink out of a pan in which the feet of those present have been washed,³² meaning by that, I presume, to abolish all those distinctions of caste which so much encumber the Gentoos ; they also steep in it, particularly for a Musulman, the tusks or bones of a boar and add some of the blood of that animal to it. This with repeating the symbol to *Wah-Gorou*, wearing an iron bracelet on one arm and letting the hair of the head and beard grow, forms the whole mystery of their religion, if such a filthy beastly ceremony can be dignified

29 The Sikhs do not make merry on the occasion of the death of a Sikh but they accept it as the Will of God and recite hymns from their scripture, the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, in resignation to it. ‘Having been sent by him they come (into the world) and recalled by Him they go back’, says Guru Nanak. ‘It is the right and privilege of the brave to die, if they die in an approved cause,’ says he.

30 Corrupt form of Hindu, derisively used. The Sikhs have no belief in gods and goddesses (*devtās* and *devīs*), nor do they venerate the cow, as mentioned in the text.

31 In calling the Sikhs atheists, Polier is writing his impressions on second-hand information given to him by those who seem to have purposely misrepresented the Sikh religion to him. The fact that they repeat *Wāhigurū* (*Wāh-Gorou*), the name of God, is enough to prove them to be theists. The Sikhs are staunch believers in the existence and fatherhood of God who, according to them, is Self-existent, Omniscient and Omnipresent and is the Creator of the universe.

32 The ceremony of initiation is also misrepresented. In fact, it is clean water, mixed with sugar and stirred in a pure iron pan with a double-edged dagger, with hymns from Sikh scriptures recited over it, that is given to the initiates to drink as a part of the ceremony. This is called *Khandé dā Amrit* or nectar of the double-edged sword.

with that name.³³ They have also started pilgrimages both to the Ganges³⁴ and their famous tank at *Ambarsar* where at fixed times they wash and perform some trifling ceremonies, invoking at the same time their *Gorou*.

Such are the Siques, the terror and plague of this part of India, a nation and power well calculated for doing mischief and encouraging rebellion in the zemindars or cultivators, who often follow steps at first with a view of saving themselves and afterwards from the pleasure of independence, and indeed it is that which makes them so troublesome, for they begin to have connections in almost all the parts they visit on their excursions, and if they are not attacked soon in their own proper provinces, it is much to be feared their tenets and manners will be adopted by all the zemindars of the *soubah* of *Delhi*, and part of *Agra*. It is, however, imagined that so soon as *Najjaf Khan* is clear of the Matchery Rajah,³⁵ he means to turn all his forces towards the Siques, and at least to drive them from this side of Sirhind, which he may I think easily do, though perhaps it would not be safe for him to go farther, except Timur Shah should on his side attack them also across the *Attek*, then indeed and by remaining a few years in the centre of their country they might be effectually reduced. The Siques make no account of infantry except for the defence of their forts, and have no artillery; their rapid motions will not allow of their having any with them, though they are not ignorant of the effect of it, when well served, which they take care to avoid as much as possible. I have nothing more to add to this account except a pretended prophecy, which the Siques say has been delivered down by some of their *Gorou*, that the Siques after remaining sometime the terror of India would at last be finally destroyed by white men coming from the westward. Who are to be those white men, time must discover, but the Siques themselves think the Europeans will fulfil the prophecy,³⁶ and are meant by it.

33 Nothing of this kind was done in the case of Muslims converted to Sikhism. To say that the tusk or bone of a boar was steeped in the consecrated water (*Khandé dā Amrit*) or that some blood of that animal was added to it particularly for Muslim converts to Sikh faith is nothing but an imaginary fib of the informants of Col. Polier. It is not improbable that Col. Polier himself had also his own prejudices against the Sikhs which have marred the objectivity of his study presented in this paper.

34 The Sikhs do not hold the Ganges or any other river as sacred, nor is it a place of pilgrimage for them.

35 This reference to the campaign of Mirza *Najjaf Khan*, the Mughal *Mir Bakhshi*, then going on against Rao Raja *Patap Singh* of *Macheri*, read along with footnote No. 24, determines the date of the writing of this paper as A.D. 1780.

36 A prophecy of this type in a slightly different form, predicting the coming of Europeans, is ascribed to Gurū Teg Bahādur, who is said to have told Emperor Aurangzeb in 1675 in answer to the charge of looking in the direction of Imperial *zānana*: 'I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down thy *pardas* and destroy thine empire.' (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Preface, xviii).

In the prophecy mentioned by Polier in 1780 in the text above, the object of destruction has been changed from the Mughal empire to the power of Sikhs. The change has evidently been made by some well-wisher of the decaying Mughal empire and an enemy of the rising power of the Sikhs.

The prophecy recorded by Macauliffe was ascribed by some people to the fertile imagination of some clever Englishman during the mutiny of 1857 to win the sympathy and support of the Sikhs against the

II

THE SIKHS

Extract from a letter from Major Polier at Delhi to Colonel Ironside at Belgram, May 22, 1776

The king's dominions are bounded on the north, NW. and WNW. by the Siques : to the NE. and within the Doab Zabita Chan possesses a large tract of country which heretofore belonged to the king, but is now, by the late treaty, finally made over to him.

As for the Seikhs, that formidable aristocratic republick, I may safely say, it is only so to a weak defenceless state, such as this is. It is properly the snake with many heads. Each zemindar who from the Attock ¹ to Hansey Issar, ² and to the gates of Delhi lets his beard grow, cries *Wah gorow*, ³ eats pork, ⁴ wears an iron bracelet, drinks *bang*, abominates the smoking of tobacco and can command from ten followers on horseback to upwards, sets up immediately for a Seik Sirdar, and as far as is in his power aggrandizes himself at the expense of his weaker neighbours ; if Hindu or Mussulman so much the better ; if not, even amongst his own fraternity will he seek to extend his influence and power ; only with this difference, in their intestine divisions, from what is seen everywhere else, that the husbandman and labourer, in their own districts, are perfectly safe and unmolested, let what will happen round about them.

From this small sketch it may be easily conceived that the Seiks are much less formidable than they are represented. It is true that they join together when invaded as was the case when Abdallah ⁵ passed through their country. But notwithstanding they had assembled an immense body of cavalry, extremely well mounted, yet they never presumed to make a single charge on the Durrany army, or even on detachments ; and considering their irregularity and want of discipline and subordination, it was well for them, I think, they did not. They satisfied themselves in making a kind of hussar ⁶ war of it, cutting off stragglers and intercepting provisions. In this they excel. To say the truth, they are indefatigable, mounted on the best horses that India can afford, each carries a matchlock of a large bore, which they handle dexterously enough, and with

protagonists of Mughal rule in India. But the reference to the prophecy in this paper written seventy-seven years before the mutiny is rather intriguing. It, however, explodes the above theory.

¹ Attock or Atak is the local name of the river Indus (Sindh) in the north-western frontier province of Pakistan. There is also a town with a fort of the same name on the eastern bank of the river at a point where the Grand Trunk Road crosses it.

² Hansi, Hissar.

³ *Wah-Gorow*, or *Wahiguru*, a name of God, meaning the Wonderful Lord.

⁴ Eating of pork or any other kind of meat is not particularly encouraged amongst the Sikhs, much less considered an essential part of the Sikh diet. The use of *bhang* prevalent amongst the majority of *Nihang* Sikhs is positively looked down upon as undesirable.

⁵ Ahmad Shah Abdali or Durrani.

⁶ Light cavalry.

which they annoy considerably, avoiding, at the same time, going in large bodies or approaching too near. Such is their way of making war, which can only appear dangerous to the wretched Hindustani troops of these quarters, who tremble as much at the name of a Seik, as people used to do, not long ago, at the mention of Mahrattas. But what is more to be admired is that those Seik Sirdars, whose territories border on the King's were but very lately of the Jauts and of their caste and tribe, under which domination had they remained, no one would have thought of them ; but now that they have put on their iron bracelet, fifty of them are enough to keep at bay a whole battalion of the King's forces, such as they are. This shows the force of prejudice and the value of military reputation. Such are the immediate neighbours of the King.

Five hundred of Nujhaf Khan's horse dare not encounter fifty Seik horsemen ; and yet the last are as despicable a set of creatures as any that can be imagined ! On the whole, was it not Sombre's party, and Letafet's forces, Nujhaf Khan would not be able to stand his ground half an hour ; and yet this is The Mighty Chief !

III A CHARACTER OF THE SIEKS

(From the observations of Colonel Polier and Mr. George Forster)

The Sieks are in general strong and well made ; accustomed from their infancy to the most laborious life and hardest fare, they make marches and undergo fatigue that really appear astonishing. In their excursions they carry no tents or luggage, except perhaps a small tent for the principal officer ; the rest shelter themselves under blankets which serve them also in cold weather to wrap themselves in, and which, on a march, cover their saddles. They have commonly two, some of them three, horses each, of the middle size, strong, active and mild tempered. The provinces of Lahore and Moulstan, noted for a breed of the best horses in Hindustan, afford them an ample supply ; and indeed they take great care to increase it by all means in their power. Though they make merry on the demise of any of their brethren,¹ they mourn for the death of a horse, thus showing their love of an animal so necessary to them in their professional capacity. The food of the Sieks is of the coarsest kind, and such as the poorest people in Hindustan use from necessity. Bread baked in ashes, and soaked in a mash made of different sorts of pulse, is the best dish, and such as they never indulge in but when at full leisure ; otherwise vetches and tares, hastily parched, is all they care for. They abhor smoking tobacco, for what reasons I cannot discover, but intoxicate themselves freely with spirits of their own country manufacture : a cup of the last they never fail taking after a fatigue at night. Their dress is extremely scanty ; a pair of long blue drawers,²

¹ See footnote 29 in I.

² Called *kachhā* or *kachlehrā kachahirā*

and a kind of chequered plaid, a part of which is fastened round the waist, and the other thrown over the shoulder, with a mean turban, form their clothing and equipage. The chiefs are distinguished by wearing some heavy gold bracelets³ on their wrists and sometimes a chain of the same metal round their turbans, and by being mounted on better horses ; otherwise no distinction appears amongst them. The chiefs are numerous, some of whom have the command of ten or twelve thousand cavalry ; but this power is confined to a small number, the inferior officers maintaining from one to two thousand, and many not more than twenty or thirty horses, a certain quota of which is furnished by the chiefs, the greater part being the individual property of the horseman.

From the spirit of independence so invariably infused amongst them their mutual jealousy and rapacious roving temper, the Sieks at this day are seldom seen co-operating in national concert ; but actuated by the influence of an individual ambition or private distrust, they pursue such plans only as coincide with these motives. An example of their forces being engaged in opposite interests has been noticed in the case of Maha Singh, who succoured the Rajah of Jumbo against the Siek party who had invaded his country. Before the chiefs of the mountaineers' country at the head of the Panjab were reduced to a tributary state, severe depredations were committed on them by the Sieks who plundered and destroyed their habitations, carried off the cattle, and, if strong and well formed, the male children, who were made converts to the faith of Nanock. But since the payment of a fixed tribute has been stipulated, which does not amount to more than five per cent of the revenue, the mountaineers are little molested, except when the Sieks have been called upon to adjust their domestic quarrels.

The extensive and fertile territories of the Sieks, and their attachment and application, in the midst of warfare, to the occupations of agriculture, must evidently produce a large revenue. The district dependent on Lahore, in the reign of Aurangzeb, produced, according to Mr. Bernier, a revenue of two hundred forty-six lacs and ninety-five thousand rupees ; and we are naturally led to suppose, from the industrious skill of the Sieks in the various branches of cultivation, that no great decrease of that amount can have taken place since the Panjab has fallen into their possession.

An extensive and valuable commerce is also maintained in their country, which has been extended to distant quarters of India, particularly to the provinces of Bengal and Behar, where many Siek merchants of opulence at this time reside. The Omichand, who took so active, though unfortunate, a share in the revolution which the English effected in Bengal, was a Siek, as is his adopted son, who is now an inhabitant of Calcutta. Merchants of every nation or sect, who may introduce a traffic into their territories, or are established under their government, experience a full protection and enjoy commercial privileges in common with their own subjects. All the same, it must be noticed that such immunities are granted only to those who remain amongst them or import wares for the immediate supply of the Siek markets. But the foreign traders, even travellers who

³ Called Kadā worn on festive occasions in many parts of the Panjab up to the beginning of the twentieth century.

attempt to pass through the Panjab, are often plundered and usually ill-treated ;⁴ in the event of no molestations being offered to people of this description, the escape is ever spoken of with a degree of joyful surprise, and a thanksgiving is offered to Providence for the singular escape. This conduct, inimical to the progress of civilization and an impediment to the influx of wealth, proceeds from an extreme jealousy of strangers, added to a rapacity of temper, which make them averse to the encouragement of any scheme in whose success they do not immediately participate.

The Sieks are not rigorous in their stipulation with the Mohammedan proselytes, who if they abstain from beef's flesh (which is held in equal abhorrence by the Sieks as by the Hindus), and perform the more ostensible duties, as burning their dead, and preserving the hair of the head, an indulgent latitude is granted in all other articles of the creed of Nanock.⁵ The Mohammedans who reside in the Panjab are subject to occasional oppression, and often to the insults of the lower classes of the people ; amongst whom it is an uncommon practice to defile the places of worship by throwing in the carcases of hogs and other things held impure by the Mussulman law. The Mohammedans are also prohibited from announcing their stated time of prayer, which conformably to their usage, is proclaimed in a loud tone of voice. A Siek, who in the chase shall have slain a wild hog, is frequently known to compel the first Mohammedan to meet to carry to his home the body of the animal ; and, on being initiated into the rites of their religion, the Sieks will sometimes require Mohammedan convert to bind on his arm the tusk of a boar,⁶ that by this act of national impurity he may more avowedly testify a renunciation and contempt of his former faith. The facts sufficiently mark the haughty and insulting demeanour, which, with few deviations, forms a prominent feature in the character of the military Sieks : but we may also ascribe a certain portion of their severe and contumelious treatment of Mohammedans to a remembrance of recent injuries.

The discordant interests which agitate the Siek nation, and the constitutional genius of the people, must incapacitate them, during the existence of these causes, from becoming a formidable defensive power ; nor are they invested with that species of executive strength which is necessary to advance and establish a distant conquest. In the defence and recovery of their country the Sieks displayed a courage of the most obstinate kind, and manifested a perseverance, under the pressure of calamities, which bear an ample testimony of native resource, when the common danger had roused them to action, and gave but one impulse to their spirit. Should any future cause call forth the combined efforts of the Sieks to maintain the existence of empire and religion, we may see some

⁴ Grant of full protection and commercial privileges to merchants of every nation or sect as mentioned in the text above is not reconcilable with the alleged plunder and ill-treatment of foreign traders passing through the Panjab. The plunder of foreign traders by some lawless marauders in a few rare cases in those unsettled days is not improbable, but that could not be generalized.

⁵ Rules of Sikh conduct, called the *rahit rahita* in their terminology, are the same for all Sikhs and are applicable to all converts whether from amongst the Hindus or Mohammedans.

⁶ The suppression or ill-treatment of Muslims seems to have been very much exaggerated and may be taken as based on wrongful information given to him by his prejudiced informants. Colonel Polier himself also seems to have been considerably influenced by the anti-Sikh propaganda of the then interested parties.

ambitious chief, led on by his genius and success, and, absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their commonwealth the standard of monarchy. The page of history is filled with the like effects, springing from like causes. Under such a form of Government, I have little hesitation in saying that the Sieks would be soon advanced to the first rank amongst the native princes of Hindustan and would become a terror of the surrounding states.⁷

The Sikhs and their College at Patna

by Charles Wilkins

INTRODUCTION

Sir Charles Wilkins, the writer of the following observations on *The Sikhs and their College at Patna* was an eminent orientalist of his times (1749 or 1750—1836). He was the son of the famous Walter Wilkins and was born in 1749 or 1750. At the age of about twenty-one he arrived in Bengal in 1770 as a writer in the East India Company's service. Like most of the Englishmen of those days, he was highly interested in the study of oriental languages. He devoted his leisure hours to the study of Sanskrit and was the first Englishman to acquire a thorough knowledge of that language and published a grammar of it in 1779. Under the patronage of the then Governor General, Warren Hastings, he translated the Hindu religio-philosophical work, the *Bhagvadgita* and deciphered many Sanskrit inscriptions. He himself prepared the first Bengali and Persian types and set up a printing-press at Calcutta for the oriental languages. He was the right hand of Sir William Jones of revered memory in founding the Asiatic Society of Bengal (later the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal), now the Asiatic Society, at Calcutta and establishing the well-known series of the *Asiatick Researches*.

After sixteen years' stay in India he returned to England in 1786 and published his translations of the Sanskrit book of fables, the *Hitopdesha*, and of Kalidas's drama *Shakuntala*. In 1800 he was made the custodian of the vast collection of oriental manuscripts taken away from the library of Tipu Sultan at Seringapatam, and he was the first Librarian of the India House Library, London.

⁷ This prophecy of George Forster came to be fulfilled in the person of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) who created a monarchy, benevolent and republican in its character, out of the various Sikh Misals and Muslim States of the Panjab towards the end of the eighteenth century. (Cf. George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, i. 295).

He was also a scholar of Islamic literature and, in 1806, he edited Richardsons' *Persian and Arabic Dictionary* which speaks so highly of the depth of Wilkin's learning. Two years later in 1808 he produced another Sanskrit Grammer which was a greatly an improved, or rather a re-written, edition of his first work on the subject. In addition to these works he wrote a large number of valuable papers on Indian subjects which created a good deal of interest in England about the people of this country.

For his deep scholarship and services to the cause of literature, the University of Oxford conferred upon him the degree of the Doctor of Civil Law (D. C. L.), and the Royal Asiatic Society of Literature gave him their medal as "*Princeps Literature Sanskritæ*," and he was elected as an Associate of the French Institute. He was also an LL. D. (Legum Doctor=Doctor of Laws) and an F. R. S. (Fellow of the Royal Society). King George IV was pleased to Knight him in 1833 and give him the badge of the Guelphic Order. Three years later, Sir Charles Wilkins died on May 13, 1836, laden with honours and international fame as a pioneer scholar of oriental literature.

These observations of Sir Charles on the *Sikhs and their College at Patna* were written for the Asiatic Society from Benares on March 1, 1781, after he had paid a visit to the Sikh temple Takht-Sahib (popularly known as *Harmandir Sahib*), the birth-place of Guru Gobind Singh, on his way to that city, and were published in the *Asiatick Researches or Transactions of the Society*, 1788. This is the first known account of the Sikh institutions written by an Englishman, the only other accounts in English of any importance written before this being from the pen of a French-Swiss gentleman Major (afterwards Colonel) Antonie Louis Henri Polier (1741-1795) written in 1780 as a memoir, and in 1776 in his letter of May 22 from Delhi to Colonel Ironside at Belgram.

I consider these observations of the learned writer interesting and worthy of the attention of the students of history and religion, and this is my only apology for placing them before the readers after the lapse of over a century and a half.

It appears that like most of the other Sikh temples in the country in those days, the Patna temple also was running a flourishing *Pāthshālā* under the guidance of the priests. It is, perhaps, therefore, that he calls the temple a 'College'.

There may be another reason also. The Schools and Colleges were then called *Dharamshalas* or *Pathshalas*. The Gentleman with whom Wilkins happened to be conversing about the Sikhs might have called the temple a 'Sikh Dharamshala,' as the Sikh temples are so often called. This might also have led Wilkins to suppose that it was a Sikh College.

It is most gratifying to find that the views of the Sikhs in respect of their temples were as modern in the eighteenth century as men of twentieth century are expected to hold. Every man of whatever caste or creed was allowed to enter them. When Wilkins asked the Sikhs present there "if I might ascend into the hall. They said it was a place of worship open to me and to all men". There were no restrictions on the admission of any one into the Sikh brotherhood, if he were willing to be initiated into it. Wilkins tells us that they offered to admit him into it.

While editing I have made no changes whatever in the original and have also retained the old original spellings, however queer they may appear today. Wherever necessary, I have given my explanations in the footnotes.

Khalsa College, Amritsar
December 31, 1939

Ganda Singh

AUTHOR'S PREFATORY LETTER

The Secretary to the Asiatick Society
Sir,

Before I left *Calcutta*, gentleman, with whom I chanced to be conversing of the sect of people who are distinguished from the worshippers of *Brahm* and the followers of Mahommed by the appellation *Seek*, informed me that there was a considerable number of them settled in the city of *Patna*, where they had a College for teaching the tenets of their philosophy. As *Patna* was in my way to *Banaris*, I no sooner arrived there than I enquired after the College, and I was presently conducted to it; and I now request you will please lay before the Society the few observations and enquiries which a single visit of about two hours could admit of my making. If such as they are they should hereafter be found useful either as a clue to guide another in his researches in the same path, or to add to some future account to render it more complete, my end in troubling you to lay it before the Society is fully answered.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,
Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,
Charles Wilkins.

Banaris, 1st March, 1781

The Seekers And Their College At Patna

I found the College¹ of the *Seeks*, situated in one of the narrow streets of Patna, at no very considerable distance from the Custom-house. I was permitted to enter the outward gate, but, as soon as I came to the steps which led into the Chapel, or public-hall, I was civilly accosted by two of the Society. I asked them if I might ascend into the hall. They said it was a place of worship open to me and to all men; but at the same time, intimated that I must take off my shoes. As I consider this ceremony in the same light

1. The *Gurdwara Harmandir Sahib*, called *Takht Patna Sahib*, the birth place of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru was born here on Poh Sudi 7, 1723 Bikrami, December 22, 1666 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb.

as uncovering my head upon entering any of our temples dedicated to the Deity, I did not hesitate to comply, and I was then politely conducted into the hall and seated upon a carpet, in the midst of the assembly, which was so numerous as almost to fill the room. The whole building² forms a square of about forty feet, raised from the ground about six or eight steps. The hall is in the centre, divided from four other apartments by wooden arches upon pillars of the same materials, all neatly carved. The room is rather longer than it is broad. The floor was covered with a neat carpet, and furnished with six or seven desks, on which stood as many of the books of their law; and the walls, above the arches, were hung with European looking glasses in gold frames, and pictures of Mussulman Princes, and Hindoo Deities. A little room, which, as you enter, is situated at the left hand end of the hall is the chancel, and is furnished with an altar covered with a cloth of gold, upon which was laid a round black shield over a long broad sword, and, on either side, a *chowry* of peacock feathers mounted in silver handle. The altar was raised a little above the ground in a declining position. Before it stood a low kind of throne plated with silver; but rather too small to be useful; above it were several flower pots and rose-water bottles, and on the left hand stood three *Urns* which appeared to be copper, furnished with notches to receive the donations of the charitable. There stood also near the altar, on a low desk, a great book³ of folio size, from which some portions are daily read in their divine service. It was covered with a blue mantle, on which were painted, in silver letters, some select passage of their law.

After I had a long conversation with two of the congregation, who had politely seated themselves, on each side of me, on the carpet, and whom I found very intelligent, notice was given that it was noon and the hour of divine service. The congregation arranged themselves upon the carpet, on each side of the hall, so as to leave a space before the altar from end to end. The great book, desk, and all, was brought, with some little ceremony from the altar; and placed at the opposite extremity of the hall. An old man, with a reverend silver beard, kneeled down before the desk with his face towards the altar; and on one side of him sat a man with a small drum, and two or three with cymbals. The book was now opened, and the old man began to chant to the tune of the drums and the cymbals; and at the conclusion of every verse, most of the congregation joined chorus in a response, with countenances exhibiting great marks of joy. Their tones were by no means harsh; and the time was quick; and I learnt that the subject was a Hymn in praise of the Unity, the Omnipresence, and the Omnipotence

2. The description given by Charles Wilkins is of the old building of the Gurdwara which does not exist at present. It was burnt, I was told during my stay there in 1933, somewhere in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the present building was erected by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other Sikh chiefs and Sardars. During the earthquake of January 1934 the buildings of the Gurdwara were rudely shaken and some of them fell to the ground. But, strangely enough, no serious harm was done to the Gurdwara proper. The Sikh Community has taken in hand the reconstruction of the demolished portions and the northern side has now been completed with the funds raised by the Chief Khalsa Dewan, Amritsar, and other institutions and *Sangats*.

3. *Guru Granth Sahib*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs.

of the Deity. I was singularly delighted with the gestures of the old man ; I never saw a countenance so expressive of infelt joy, whilst he turned about from one to another, as it were, bespeaking their assents to those truths which his very soul seemed to be engaged in chanting forth. The Hymn being concluded, which consisted of about twenty verses, the whole congregation got up and presented their faces with joined hands towards the altar, in the attitude of prayer. A young man stood forth, and, with a loud voice and distinct accent, solemnly pronounced a long prayer or kind of liturgy, at certain priods of which all the people joined in a general response, saying *Wa Gooroo*⁴. They prayed against temptation ; for grace to do good ; and for the general good of mankind ; and a particular blessing to the *Seeks* ; and for the safety of those who at that time were on their travels. This prayer was followed by a short blessing from the old man, and an invitation to the assembly to partake of a friendly feast. The book was then closed and restored to its place at the altar, and the people being seated as before, two men entered bearing a large iron caldron called *curray*,⁵ just taken from the fire, and placed it in the centre of the hall upon a low stool. These were followed by others with five or six dishes, some of which were of silver, and a large pile of leaves sewed together with fibres in the form of plates. One of these plates was given to each of the company without distinction, and the dishes being filled from the caldron, their contents were served out till every one had got his share : myself was not forgotten ; and, as I was resolved not to give them the smallest occasion for offence, I ate my portion. It was a kind of sweetmeat,⁶ of the consistence of soft brown sugar, composed of flour and sugar mixed up with clarified butter, which is called *Ghee*. Had not the *Ghee* been rancid, I should have relished better. We were next served with a few sugar plums ; and here ended the feast and the ceremonies of the day. They told me the religious part of the ceremony was daily repeated five times. I now took my leave, inviting some of the principal men amongst them who were about to return to their own country through *Banaris*, to pay me a visit.

In the course of the conversation I was engaged in with the two *Seeks* before the service, I was able to gather the following circumstances. That the founder of their faith was called *Naneek Sah*, who flourised about four⁷ hundred years ago at *Punjab*, and who, before his apostasy, was a *Hindoo* of the *Kshetry* or military tribe ; and that his body disappeared as the *Hindoos* and *Mussulmans* were disputing for it, for upon their removing the cloth that covered it, it was gone. That he left behind him a book, composed by himself,⁸ in verse and the language of *Punjab*, but a character partly of his own

4. *Wahiguru*, God ; also translated as 'Glory to thee, O Lord !'

5. *Karahi*.

6. *Karah Prasad*.

7. This should be 'about three huu'dred to two hundred fifty years'. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, lived from 1469 to 1539 A.D.

8. Here Wilkins evidently refers to the *Guru Grantha Sahib*. The whole of it was not composed by Guru Nanak. In addition to the compositions of the Gurus, first to the fifth and the nineth

invention,⁹ which teaches the doctrines of the faith he had established. That they called this character, in honour of their founder, *Gooroo-Mookhee : from the mouth of the preceptor*. That this book, of which that standing near the altar, and several others in the hall, were copies, teaches that there is but one God, Omnipotent and Omnipresent, filling all space and pervading all matter : and that He is to be worshiped and invoked. That there will be day of retribution, when virtue will be rewarded and vice punished (I forgot to ask in what manner) ; that it not only commands universal toleration, but forbids murder, theft, and such other deeds as are, by the majority of the mankind, esteemed crimes against society ; and inculcates the practice of all the virtues, but particularly universal philanthropy, and a general hospitality to strangers and travellers. This is all my short visit would permit me to learn of this book. It is a folio volume, containing about four or five hundred pages.

They told me further, that some years after this book of *Naneek Sah* had been promulgated, another¹⁰ made its appearance, now held in almost as much esteem as the former. The name of the author has escaped my memory ; but they favoured me with an extract from the book itself in praise of the Deity. The passage had struck my ear on my first entering the hall when the students were all engaged in reading. From the similarity of the language to the *Hindoovee*,¹¹ and many *Sanscrit* words, I was able to understand a good deal of it, and I hope, at some future period, to have the honour of laying a translation of it before the Society. They told me I might have copies of both their books, if I would be at the expence of transcribing them.

I next enquired why they were called *Seeks*, and they told me it was a word borrowed from one of the commandments of the founder which signifies "Learn thou" ; and it was adopted to distinguish the sect soon after he disappeared. The word, as is well known, has the same import in the *Hindoovee*.

I asked them what were the ceremonies used in admitting a proselyte. A person having shown a sincere inclination to renounce his former opinions, to any five or more *Seeks* assembled together, in any place, as well on the highway as in a house of worship, they send to first shop where sweetmeats are sold and procure a small quantity of a particular sort which is very common, and as I recollect, they call *Batasa*, and having diluted it in pure water, they sprinkle some of it on the body, and into the eyes of the convert, whilst one of the best instructed repeats to him in any languages with which he is conversant the chief cannons of their faith, exacting from him a solemn promise to abide by them the rest of his life. This is the whole of the ceremony.

(with a Shaloka of the tenth Guru, as is commonly believed), it embodies the compositions of several other saints, Muslims and Hindus, and even Sudras, of both sexes.

9. This view held by the Sikhs as early as 1781, when Wilkins visited Patna, lends further support to those who hold that Gurmukhi characters were invented, or perfected in their present forms, by Guru Nanak himself and not by Guru Angad, the Second Guru.

10. Evidently, the *Dasam Granth*, also called the *Daswin Padshahi da Granth*.

11. Hindi, Devnagri.

The new convert may then choose a *Gooroo*,¹² or preceptor, to teach him in the language of their scripture, who first gives him the alphabet to learn, and so leads him on, by slow degrees, until he wants no further inscription. They offered to admit me into their Society ; but I declined the honor ; contenting myself with the alphabet which they told me to guard as the apple of my eye, as it was a sacred character. I find it differs but little from the *Devnagur*.¹³ The number, order and powers of the tettters are exactly the same. The language itself is a mixture of *Persian*, *Arabic* and some *Sanskrit*, grafted upon the provincial dialect of *Punjab*, which is a kind of *Hindoovee*, or, as it is vulgarly called by us, *moors*.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SIKHS

by George Forster

INTRODUCTION

It was in the summer of 1938 that at the suggestion of the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar I went to the Deccan in search of some documents bearing on the history of the Sikhs. I was at Satara in the months of August and September, and there in the historical Museum I was lucky enough to find very valuable private correspondence of Lords Ellenborough, Hardinge, Dalhousie and Gough and of some of the Political Assistants addressed to Frederick Currie as British Resident at Lahore. This has since been published by the Sikh History Society, Amritsar, under the title of *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars*.

During one of my stray rambles at Satara in the first week of August, I unexpectedly came across an old friend from Persia, Mr. Ratan Singh Minhas of the village of Padhiana, near Adampur, district Jullundur. He had left the Panjab, presumably for good, and, having married a Maratha woman, had settled down at Satara. He knew my interests, and a few days later he brought to me an old envelop which, he said, he had picked up from amongst some waste papers at a shop near his residence. This cover, to my great surprise, contained two typewritten copies of letters, one of 16 pages "from George Forster to Mr. Gregory at Lucknow, dated in Kachmere, 1783," containing an Extract from another letter bearing on the Sikhs, and the other, 12 pages, "from Mr. (John) Griffith to Mr. (Alexander) Adamson, Bombay (dated Surat, 17th February, 1794), containing information respecting the characters of the inhabitants on the banks of the Indus. The second letter, which is more like an official Memorandum, as well contained

12. The word *Gooroo* (Guru) here is used in the sense of *Ustad* or teacher.

13. The Devnagri, Hindi or Sanskrit : characters.

a section on the "Dominions of the Seecks", in addition to sections on Sind, Multan and Kandahar.* This was again a lucky find.

The first of these two letters, from Forster to Gregory, is marked "Home Miscellaneous, Vol. 685, pp. 90-114" and is in the form of a regular letter with a covering note in the beginning and the signature of George Forster (typewritten) at the end, mentioning the place and date of writing as "Charlotte Street, Portland Place, 9th June, 1785," while the second is marked "Home Misc. 456 B, pp. 625-99" on the top of the title-page.

On comparison, I find that the Extract sent by George Forster to Mr Gregory is from Letter XI of the first volume of his *A Journey From Bengal To England*, London, 1798, pp. 253-95, with a few changes here and there. The original gives in brief the history of the rise and progress of the Sikh people from the time of Guru Nanak to the beginning (February-March) of the year 1783 when, during his journey, he travelled through the eastern hilly tracts of the Panjab. He has also given therein his own observations and impressions which are of considerable importance to the students and scholars of history. The concluding paragraph of this letter, not included in the Extract, is really significant. It says :

In the defence and recovery of their country, the Sicques displayed a courage of the most obstinate kind and manifested a perseverance, under the pressure of calamities, when the common danger roused them to action, and gave but one impulse to their spirit. Should any future cause call forth the combined efforts of the Sicques to maintain the existence of empire and religion, we may see some ambitions chief led on by his genius and success, and, absorbing the power of his associates, display, from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy. The page of history is filled with like effects, springing from like causes. Under such a form of Government, I have little hesitation in saying that the Sicques would be soon advanced to the first rank among the native princes of Hindostan; and would become a terror to the surrounding states.

And this prophecy of George Forster came to be literally fulfilled in the person of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-39), who not only took under his shelter the territories of the various Sikh Sardars but also conquered a number of states and consolidated them all into the kingdom of the Panjab, carrying its frontiers on all the four sides to the furthest possible limits unknown to history before him.

George Forster, the author of this letter, was a civil servant on the Madras establishment of the East India Company. He was a man of adventure and a scholar of considerable merit. He left Calcutta on May 23, 1782, on his long and arduous overland journey to England and passed through the north-eastern hilly tracts of the Panjab in February, March and April 1783. He was a keen observer of men and things and has

* This memorandum is also being included in the present collection.

recorded his impressions, and the information collected by him during the journey, in a series of letters, published in two volumes in London in 1798 under the title of *A Journey from Bengal to England &c.*

In addition to occasional references to the Sikhs in other letters, *vide pp. i. 128-30, 128-99, 227-28 and ii. 83, 88*, Forster has devoted Letter XI, pp. i. 253-95, exclusively to the Sikhs. In writing this he seems to have received a good deal of information from Colonel Polier, a Swiss Engineer, who had written a paper on the Sikhs in 1780, later on read at a meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (now the Asiatic Society) at Calcutta on December 20, 1787. In his own words, Forster was under "great obligations to Colonel Polier of the Honourable Company's service (1757-75, 1782-89) for having furnished me with large historical tracts of the Sicques". Like a genuine enquirer, he had "no tendency to discolour or misrepresent truth". "Guided by no views of interest, nor impressed by any frown of power, I was enabled", he says, "to examine the objects that came before me through a dispassionate medium". And he has succeeded in it to a very great extent. His letter under reference is a fairly objective study of the Sikhs of the second half of the eighteenth century and is a mine of useful information. God willing, it shall soon be made available in extenso, edited with such notes and comments as have become necessary in the light of more reliable documentary evidence.

The extracts given in the letter of George Forster to Mr. Gregory, dated 9th June, 1785, reproduced below, appear to have been made at random without any coherent link. But as they are all put together by the copyist without the separating indications, a few clarifying explanations have become necessary and are being given in the footnotes.

Patiala,
March 9, 1960

Ganda Singh

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SIKHS

Sir,* -

Having gone through the subject of the Powers, which bear the most conspicuous and efficient parts in the Transactions of Hindostan, or who were more immediately brought forward on the Theatre of the last War, I will proceed to lay before you a cursory Description of the Seicks and Afghans, nations who, from the remoteness of their Situations, and, having no European connections, are hitherto but partially known to us.

In my Route overland, I had an opportunity of procuring some sketches of the History of the Seiks, which were reduced into a form, and inserted in that collection of letters containing the relation of my Journey to Jumboo with which you already have been furnished.†

* Commonwealth Relation Office Library (formerly India office Library) records *Home miscellaneous Series volume 685 (3)*, pp. 90-114.

† This evidently refers to Letter XI given in the first volume of Forster's *A Journey from Bengal to England* (London, 1798) pp. 253-95.

Though the whole Relation, as it now stands, may not closely point at the given object of this analysis, yet as it will prevent the trouble of Reference, and the selection of matter difficult to extract, and also appear more in order, I will with your permission subjoin it in this Place.

**Extract of a letter from Mr. Forster to Mr. Gregory at Lucknow,
dated in Kachmere 1783**

"As several occasions have offered of introducing the Seicks to your Notice, it will obviously enough occur to you, that I should endeavor to give some description of this new and extraordinary people.

"Now, my dear Sir, you will be pleased to know that I do not possess a well grounded knowledge of the subject ; I cannot deduce, satisfactorily to myself their story from the period, in which Nanock, the Institutor of their sect and their Lawgiver, lived. Nor can I affix a date with a sufficient exactness to the time of his existence.¹ Neither can I follow them with necessary order, through the gradations and progress which they have made until they arrived at their present state of grandeur. You who are well apprized of the wretched deficiency of Materials for the formation of Eastern History and the irresistible tendency which our Eastern countrymen have to fiction and the pleasing produce of fancy, will make for me every indulgent allowance. One thing I will intreat of you to understand, that if I should not insert the whole truth, which does not result from the desire of suppressing facts, nothing but what you may place a confidence in, will be introduced.

"Under the shelter of this protecting Preliminary, I will proceed and inform you, that Nanock, the Founder of the sect of the Seicks flourished about 300 years ago.² The place of his birth does not seem to be fixed on, but it is universally believed that he was interred at Amritsar :³ this Town is situated at the head of the Punjab about 120 miles to the South and by East of Jumboo, and in consequence of its being the burial place⁴ of Nanock is become of great importance and the Seicks hold it in the same degree of veneration and sanctity as Mecca is behind by the Mussulman.

"Nanock - to whose name his Follower's have added the appellation of Shaw which, be pleased to observe is usually bestowed on Faquires, appears to have been well qualified

1. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, was a contemporary of the Lodhi Sultans of Delhi (1469-1526) and the first two Mughal Emperors of India (1526-39). He was born in 1469 during the reign of the first Lodhi Sultan Bahlo Khan (1450-88) and died in 1539 during the time of Emperor Humayun (1530-39, 1555-56).

2. In the year 1783, when this letter was written, it was 244 years that he had died (1539), having lived for seventy years.

3. Guru Nanak was born at Talwand, Rai Bhoe, later known as Nankana Sahib, to the west of Lahore, now in Pakistan. He was not interred at Amritsar. In fact, no Guru of the Sikhs died at Amritsar. Guru Nanak died at a place called Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) on the left bank of the river Ravi, opposite to the town of Dera Baba Nanak in the district of Gurdaspur.

4. The importance of Amritsar is due not to its being the burial place of Guru Nanak but to the Sikh (Golden) temple, called the Darbar Sahib, and other Sikh historical associations. The town was founded by the fourth Guru Ramdas in 1574, thirty-five years after the death of Guru Nanak. It may also be mentioned that the Sikhs do not bury their dead but cremate them.

for the instituting and establishing a new Sect. It is said that he was inflexibly just, that he was rigorously abstinent, and that he possessed the most undaunted courage.

"When it is considered that the Worship of the Hindoos is, at this day loaded with endless ceremonies and accompanied with a ridiculous and a puerile Grimace, it will be allowed that the tenets of the System which Nanock framed, are grounded on no unreasonable Basis. The tenor and the grand purport of the Seick Religion pointedly requires an abolition of the Worship of images. Their places of Devotion are plain, and divested of every ornament and figure.

"Instead of the Intermediation of inferior Deities they are ordered to address the Supreme Being, through the medium of Nanock his favorite agent and Deputy. Though a very material difference exists between the religious tenets of the Hindoos and those of the Seicks, yet the groundwork of both exhibit strong features of similarity. The Article indeed of receiving Proselytes, in the Doctrine of the Seicks causes an essential deviation from the Hindoo system. It totally overthrows those wonderful Barriers which were constructed and affixed by Brimha,⁵ for the arrangement of the different ranks and Professions of his People. When the Nation of the Seicks becomes sufficiently populous and has acquired a competent stability, it is not improbable but an alteration may take place in that tenet.

"They permit the growth of the hair of the head and beard, they generally wear an Iron Bracelet on the left⁶ hand and the use of Tobacco is proscribed among them. Nanock, it is said first published his Doctrine amongst the Mountains bordering on the Northern Plains of Hindostan, and in that space which lies between Shirhind and Lahor. He was there in a situation of more security than had he dwelt in the open Country, and he had also the advantage of being in the neighbourhood of an opulent and a numerous people. No notice of consequence it would seem had been taken of the Seicks until the reign of Acber, when that active Prince in the course of his subduing the Hindoo Mountaineers, discovered their Haunts and nearly extirpated them.⁷

"This Emperor, it is recorded, was so hostile to them, and so determined on crushing the existence of their Sect, that he imposed a Price on the head of every Seick.⁸ From that era to the period of Nadir Shaw's return from his Delhi expedition, but few authenticated facts can be produced of the state of this People - When the Nadir's army were returning homewards laden with spoil, and from their success and the general dread entertained of them, regardless of regularity and discipline they were, fiercely attacked

5. The caste system of the Hindus, evidently referred to by Forster, is ascribed to Manu, the great law giver of the ancient Hindus, and was not introduced by Brahma.

6. The iron bracelet, called Kara, is not necessarily worn on the left wrist. It may be worn on any wrist, though it is generally worn on the right.

7. Emperor Akbar was not hostile to the Sikh Gurus at all. In fact, he was friendly to them.

8. It was Emperor Bahadur Shah I (1707-12, son of Aurangzeb) during whose reign the Sikhs were actively persecuted and a royal edict was issued on the 29th of Shawwal in the 4th regnal year, December 10, 1710, to kill the disciples of Nanak (the Sikhs) wherever they were found -- *Nānak-prastān rā har jā kih ba-yāband ba-qatl rasānand*.

by the Seicks who routed their rear and stripped them of great part of their plunder. Towards the latter end of Mahomed Shaw's reign and the beginning of that of his Successor, when the charm, which since Tamerlane's conquest of Hindostan, had bound together that extensive and Grand Empire, and had proclaimed it invincible throughout Asia was broken, and it may be said, wholly dissolved, the Seicks rushed out of their fortresses where they had been patiently waiting for the occasion and seized on or ravaged the greatest part of the Punjab*.

"After various struggles with the Mussulmen, the Seicks possessed themselves of Sirhind, Lahor and Moultan, but they were attacked and driven out of a great part of their new acquisitions by the Afghans under their famous Chief Abdullah,[†] who was afterwards more generally known in India and Afghanistan by the name of Ahmed Shaw. This Prince affected great indignation at the Seicks presuming to occupy the Imperial Palace of Lahor, and that the supposed pollution might be wiped away, on his retaking that city, it is said he caused many of the Seicks to be put to death, and ordered that the facing and the steps of the great reservoir of water should be washed with their blood. The Seicks by making some extraordinary and well timed efforts in their turn drove the Afghans out of that part of Hindostan and that they might exhibit an Example of forbearance to their enemies and a restraint of the Power of revenge, the warmest passion in the breast of an Asiatic, and yet that they might not seem insensible of the injury, which had been offered to them, poured the blood of swine in those places which the Afghans had washed with that of theirs. In a war which the Seicks had with Timur Shaw, the present Afghan Emperor, they lost the Province of Moultan, which, contrary to the general character of the Seicks, for Military ability, was given up with scarcely any resistance.

"This instance of such unusual Remissness in them seems to me very inexplicable, unless it was occasioned by their internal dissensions.¹⁰

"The Government of the Seicks, if any fixed denomination can be applied to it, may be termed Aristocratical. Their Chiefs are numerous and wholly independent of each other. They eventually act in concert with, and in opposition to their own Body, as in the case of Mhah Sing who has succoured the Rajah of Jumboo against the Seick Chief who invaded that Country.¹¹

This order was repeated during the time of Emperor Farrukh-Siyar, and "to give effect to this mandate, a reward," according to Malcolm, "was offered for the head of every Sikh." (*Sketch of the Sikhs*, 85; *Miftāh-ut-Tawārikh*, 398; M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, i. 113.)

* So denominated from a Persian Compound, meaning five Rivers or Waters which intersect this Country. (Forster)

† or Ahmed Khan. (Forster)

9. Ahmad Shah Durrani (1722-72).

10. In the winter of 1778-79, Sardar Ganda Singh Bhangi was embroiled with other chiefs and could not personally look to the defence of Multan which was surrendered by a lieutenant of his after a show of resistance. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 123.

11. This refers to the struggle between Sardar Maha Singh Sukkarchakkia and Sardar Jai Singh Kanhaiya in 1783, when Surbakhsh Singh, son the Kanhaiya Sardar, was killed in a battle near Batala. Latif, *History of the Panjab*, 311.

"From the observations which I have made of the Seicks they would appear to be a haughty and a high spirited people. Once I travelled in the company of a Seick Horseman for some days, and though I made to him several tenders of my acquaintance, he treated them all with great reserve, and a covered sort of disdain. There was no reason to be particularly offended at his hauteur towards me, for he regarded every other Person in the same manner. His answer, when I asked him very respectfully in whose service he was retained, seemed strikingly characteristic of what I conceive to be the disposition of the Nation. He said, in a tone of voice and with a countenance which glowed with and was keenly animated by the warm Spirit of Liberty and independence, that he disclaimed an earthly Master, and that he was the servant only of his Prophet.

"The Seicks, it is asserted, believe, tho they do not loudly insist on it, that Nanock is an Incarnation of Vishnow,^{*12} which the Hindoo Prophecies have foretold, is yet to exist and is to be the last one.

"The force of the Seicks may be said to wholly consist in Cavalry, they have in their army some Artillery, but it is so awkwardly managed and so ill attended to, that little benefit is derived from it. A Seick Horseman is armed with a Matchlock and a sabre, both in their kind, excellent. In this matter I speak from a real knowledge, for in the course of my travels, I had twice an opportunity of meeting with their Parties, each of which might consist of 200 men. The Horses were better than any I had ever seen either amongst the Hindoo or Mussulman Troops in the Eastern parts of India. The men were well clothed, chiefly in white Iamahst[†], and their arms, together with their accoutrements, which consisted of priming horns and Ammunition Pouches, were in good order. The latter were mostly covered with our scarlet cloth and ornamented with gold lace.

"From the great predilection which the Seicks have for fire arms, and the constant use which they make of them, their mode of attack and defence, is different from that of any other Cavalry in Asia.

"A party from thirty to forty and fifty will advance on a gallop close up to the enemy and previously to the giving their Fire that they may do it with the greater certainty they draw in their Horses, at the performance of which Manoeuvre, the animal is so thoroughly trained, that most of them, on receiving a gentle stroke on the neck, will stop on the full career. Immediately on their pieces being discharged, they retreat about 100 paces, load, and repeat the same mode of annoying the enemy.

"It is not from this peculiarity in their discipline that the Seicks have made themselves formidable.

"This in my opinion is a great defect in their army, and if they persist in a continuance of it to the entire exclusion of Artillery, it may yet be a long space of time, ere they are enabled to drive the Afghans out of Hindostan, or extinguish the remains of the Mogul Government. Both which objects they entertain sanguine hopes of

12. There is no such belief recognized or commonly current among the Sikhs.

* The Supreme Being of the Hindoos. (Forster)

† A Long Calico Gown. (Forster)

accomplishing, and in the probable evolution of the fate of Empires, this event may be expected.

"The success and Conquests of the Seicks have principally arisen from their unparalleled activity and the endurance of an almost incredible fatigue. These Constitutional Endowments they derive from an invariable Exercise of every species of temperance which gives them powerfull advantages over the debauched and debilitated Mussulman".

"A Body of Seick Troops has been known to make daily marches of 40 miles, and this exertion has not been confined to a single operation, which would not be remarkable, but it has been continued for many days.

"In 1782 the Territories of the Seicks, which towards the limits are often varying, were bounded on the north by the grand chain of mountains, which extend in a curved line across the Head of the Punjab ; on the East by the Possessions of the Emperor, and his officers, which take in the Districts of Panipet and Karnal ; on the south-East by the Country of the Jauts, which was conquered by Najjif Khan and still continues annexed to the remains of the Empire, and on the South by Moultan ; and the West and North-West by the Indus, and the Districts of Attock, which are now under the Dominions of the Afghans.

"From their being possessed of an ample, and a fertile Territory, and being when not occupied in Military service, much attached to the Business of Agriculture, and well skilled in it, it must be supposed that the revenues of the Seicks are very considerable, tho it would be presumptuous in me to attempt at ascertaining the amount.

"The Subah of Lahor in the Reign of Aurungzebe produced the annual revenue to Government according to Mr. Bernier of 246 Lacks and 95 thousand Rupees ; and from the general character of the Seicks for their knowledge in the cultivation of Lands, I should imagine that there had been no decrease in the Revenue, since the country has been in their possession.

"Their Military Force also must be great, but I am as little enabled to reduce that point to any certainty as to fix the amount of their Revenue.

"A Seick will say that his Country can furnish 4, or 500,000 Horsemen, and to authenticate his story, he tells you, that every person, even in the possession of a trifling property keeps a Horse, Matchlock and Side Arms. In which case, and if we can believe that they can produce when in unity 200,000 Horse, their Force in Cavalry must be greater, than that of any power now existing in Hindostan.

"The Sicks have taken possession of all the country of Zabeta Khan, and have left to him little more than Ghous Gheer his principal town and fort.

"This weak Chief in every thing the reverse of his Father, thought to obtain the protection of the Seicks, by becoming one of their Sect. He has been grievously disappointed, for when I was in that neighbourhood his Fort was besieged by the Seicks, and he had been obliged to call in a Body of Mercenaries to his assistance. The name which he had assumed in consequence of his Conversion was Nemez Sing,¹³ the first

13. In fact, Zabita Khan had taken the name of Dharam (Durm) Singh as stated by Forster himself. *A Journey from Bengal to England*, i. 282, footnote.

part of which is evidently in Allusion to his former profession of faith.

"The Seicks do not seem to be at all rigorous in their requisitions from Mussulmen Proselytes, who, if they abstain from eating Beef Flesh, which is held in as much Abhorrence by the Seicks as by the Hindoos, they are indulged in every other article.

"The Nation of the Seicks may be said to have wholly sprung from Hindoo Converts, not but many Mussulmen have been admitted amongst them, yet they constitute a small portion of the whole People and are immediately distinguished from the Hindoo Seicks, as well in the difference of Manner, as in the dissimilarity of Features.

"The Word Seick is I apprehend a Corruption of Sing,¹⁴ which signifies in the Hindoo Language a Lion, and which Title is given to every Seick, in the same Manner as the Khan is taken by the Afghans and Patans. This supposition I have been the farther induced to make from having observed, that by many of the Mussulmen, and likewise amongst themselves, they are denominated Seicks and Sings indiscriminately".

In this Account, which may I be allowed to say has a reasonable claim to authenticity you will see that the Seicks are a very respectable People, and when united in a common Cause must be powerful and formidable.

They generally in their predatory Excursions into the Countries of the neighbouring Hindoo Rajahs act as may be correspondent with their respective views, and are often seen engaged in opposite alliances, and in Hostilities with each other. But when incited by any grand national Concern, their Chiefs become confederated, and their Armies are combined.

The Seick Forces were wholly united, during the War which they carried on against the Afghans, whom they ultimately drove out of the Punjab, and have maintained a firm possession of it since that period.

In the beginning of the Year 1783 a considerable Body of Seicks came thro the Territories of Zabita Khan who as I have before noticed is become a Dependant on them, and approached the Ganges, where it forms the Western limit of Rohil Cund, with the design of crossing the River and invading the Possessions of the Vizier. At that time I happened to be travelling through Rohil Cund, and was a Witness of the disorder and general Terror which prevailed amongst the Inhabitants, many of whom, quitting the open Towns and Villages retired into Forts and Places inaccessible to Cavalry.

The Seicks perceiving the difficulty and danger of passing a River in the face of an Enemy, for the Vizier's Troops had been drawn together, and stationed on the Eastern Bank of the Ganges to oppose their crossing, retired into their own Country. This fact has been adduced to shew that the Seicks did command an undisturbed Passage to the

The word *Nemez* is *Namāz*, meaning Muslim prayer. A pious Muslim who recites his prayers regularly is generally known as *Namāzi*.

14. The word *Seick* (Sikh) is not a corruption of *Sing*. It is, in fact, the Panjabi (Prakrit) form of Sanskrit *Shishya* which means a disciple. The surname *Singh* (lion) was taken by the Sikhs when Guru Gobind Singh instituted the order of the *Khālsā* in 1699 after which all Sikhs who received baptism and undertook to follow the discipline of the Khalsa were known as *Singhs*.

borders of the Vizier's Territories, without any effectual opposition being made, either by Zabita Khan, or the Emperor's Officers.

The rapid progress which Scindia has lately made in the Northern Quarter of India, and the ascendancy which he has thereby gained in the Government of Delhi and Agra, must soon place him in the Situation of becoming an avowed opponent of the Seicks, and in the course of events will throw him between that Nation and the Vizier, to whom, from the reasons before stated in the sketch of Scindia this Chief will become a more secure Barrier, than that which has hitherto existed.

Little more remains to be said of the Seicks, than when they shall find themselves checked in their views by the power of Scindia on the East side of their Dominions (if he continues in prosecuting the object which has now engaged him) that they will, it may be concluded, turn their attention towards the Afghans, their declared Enemies, who still hold valuable and extensive Possessions in Hindostan.

The Afghans are the indigenous Possessors of that Tract of Country which extends from the Indus to the Confines of the Province of Chorason in Persia, and stretches in a Southern Direction from the Mountains of Tartary to the Sea Coast.

Nadir Shaw in his March into Hindostan was detained a considerable time (it is said a Year) in reducing the famous Fortress of Kundahar, and in forcing a passage through Afghanistan. Nor had he accomplished this Service, so effectually, without the Assistance of a large Body of Afghans, who were brought over to espouse his Cause, at the Instance of one of their principal Chiefs, then known by the Name of Abdallah or Ahmed Khan and afterwards in consequence of the Empire which he founded, distinguished by the Title of Ahmed Shaw.

Immediately on the event of the death of Nadir, which happened in 1748, this Afghan officer withdrawing his Forces from the Persian Army returned into his own Country, and supported by a veteran Army and a strong family Influence, he became enabled to proclaim himself Master of all the Afghan Territories. After having fully established his Authority, he penetrated into India, and there making important conquests and meeting with various Success, as has been mentioned in the Sketch on the Seicks, Ahmed Shaw returned into his own Dominions, and died about fourteen Years ago,¹⁵ at the new City of Kundahar, which he himself built, and had designed to be the Capital of his Country.

Ahmed Shaw was succeeded by his eldest Son Timur, who has chosen Cabul as his place of Residence, and has made, I think two Expeditions into India, where on the Issue of an obstinate Contention with the Seicks, this Prince retained the Possession of the little Kingdom of Kachmire, the Town Districts of Attock, together with the Province of Moultan, including in it the Territories of Scinde.

15. Ahmad Shah Durrani died at Toba Maruf in the Suleman hills on the night of October 16-17, 1772, and was carried to and burried at Kandahar.

Khchmire is governed on behalf of the Emperor, by an Afghan officer, who, on the remitting a Peshcush¹⁶ of Seven Lacks of Rupees to the Treasury, is permitted to exercise a Sovereign Authority there, and who indeed, from the peculiar situation of this principality, it being walled in by a Circle of lofty Mountains, and its remote distance from the Seat of Empire, from which also, it is divided by the Indus a River of a most difficult Passage, with reason deems himself a very independant chief, and does not seem to be in any wise affected by the operation of any Power in India.

The Surdar of Attock, an Hindostan Mussulman, is a Tributary of Timur Shaw, and is assessed the annual Sum of 50,000 Rupees, which is collected, or not, as the Motions of the Shaw's Army may be directed; and the Territory of Scind, laying to the Southward of Attock, were, while I was in the neighbourhood of that Country, in a Manner dismembered from the Afghan Empire, no Revenue having been remitted to Cabul for two years or any Measure adopted to reduce it to obedience.

The Chief of Moultan confiding in his local advantages, and presuming on the indolent Administration of the present Shaw who now evinces no Mark of an enterprizing disposition, and whose time is chiefly passed in the Haram, has assumed a great degree of Independence, and shows only such observance to the orders sent from Cabul as may be correspondent with his own Conveniency. This Province, which, in the grand division of the Mogul Empire includes also Scind produced in the reign of Aurung-Zebe, according to Mr. Bernier, a Revenue of 118 Lacs of Rupees, which at this day is diminished to more than half of that Amount.

In this outline you will perceive that the Afghan Dominion in India is not founded on either a flourishing or a firm Basis, and that under the Auspices of Timur Shaw, there is little reason to expect that it will be extended or that from it he will derive any considerable Influence in the Affairs of Hindostan.

It has been often rumoured at the Court of Delhi, and the Report has also prevailed in our parts of India, that Timur is determinately bent on crossing the Indus with a large Army for the purpose of securely establishing the present Mogul Family on the Throne, and investing it with the Powers, of which it has been so long deprived. But this is an idle tale calculated merely to raise the Spirits of a drooping Court, or to amuse the News Mongers of the Bezar—and so distant from the truth that, instead of being in a Condition to undertake Foreign Expeditions, this Prince seems afraid of quitting his Capital and seldom even leaves his Palace.*

Thus Sir, to the utmost of my abilities, and with a scrupulous adherence to the Spirit of the Facts which have presented themselves, and which I have carefully avoided

16. *Peshkash, a tribute.*

* In 1783 when I was at Caboul, there was a general Outcry against the Shaw by the Soldiery for his not having issued any Payment to his Army for upwards of two Years; and I likewise learned that since the Year 80, when he had made a Journey to the City of Peshour, which he usually did in the Winter to avoid the Colds of Caboul, and was there nearly cut off by a strong disaffected Party, he had not shown any Inclination of moving out of his Capital.

to discolour or warp by any prejudice or political Bias, have I discussed the Subject, which you were pleased to intrust to my Investigation, and I shall receive a very high sense of pleasure, should my Mite have added to your store of Information, or in any degree facilitated the important Service in which you are engaged. But, Sir, permit me to observe, that with every precaution which foresight or sound Judgement is capable of exercising, and aided by the most wise and salutary Regulations for the strengthening and directing any System of Government in India, yet it will be oftentimes strongly agitated by effects arising from foreign Alliances and Connections.

From the reasons which I have been induced to point out, it is shown that Madajee Scindia who is drawn to us by the attraction of self interest, may, with a provident attention become a powerful and a valuable Ally, particularly for the purpose of influencing the Poonah Councils in their Operations against Tippoo Sultan, or checking the Behar Rajah in any hostile views on our Bengal Possessions yet this Tenure is now held on the Life and Fortunes of one Man for Scindia has no heir to his Dominions, and were he now to die, they are not so firmly consolidated nor have they been so long in his Possession, as to ensure their devolving on any nominated Successor.

The Existence of States in Hindostan must ever rest on precarious and unsubstantial Grounds, having no fixed Principle for their Support, or established Ordinances for the Security of the People, and where the Rulers of them are subject to be cut off on every occasion, when the Passions of Ambition or Revenge can with the hope of success be gratified.

When you consider, Sir, the grand Revolutions which have taken place in that quarter of the World, even within no wide Compass of time, and observe the depressed reverse of Fortune which the Mogul Empire has undergone, you must testify a wonder mingled with an Awe, and as a Man you must feel a humiliating Mortification.

In the Year 1707 when Aurung-Zebe died, it may be said without any violation of the truth, that Hindostan,* whether for its Military Resource, its Wealth or Magnitude, was the most distinguished Empire in the World ; and at that period, it is to be noted that the English were known, only on the Sea Coasts of that Country and occupied, under many restrictions, merely the Profession of Merchants.

Permit me for a Moment to direct your attention to the view, which at this day is exhibited at Delhi, where you will see the heir of the Grandson of Aurung-Zebe, from the decline of the fortunes of his House, reduced to such urgent distress, as to solicit in the Country, so lately under the dominion of his Ancestors, a Maintenance from an English Subject.

Pardon this Digression which I have been led into by the desire of holding up to you so lively an Image of the Instability and rapid Declension of this Eastern Empire, and I

* This Empire was bounded on the North by the Mountains of Tartary, on the West by the Territories of Kandahar, on the South by the Indian Ocean, and on the East, by the Kingdoms of Arcan and Ava ; Forming in length, reckoning from Cabul to Cape Comerin a space of 1800 Miles, and in its extreme breadth 1600 Miles, and producing, according to Mr. Bernier a Revenue of 20 Millions Sterling.

will now wholly close this Analysis, with expressing an unfeigned wish, that the Measures which have been adopted for the Regulation of our Government in India, may be successful and permanent, and that the Effects arising from wise and Vigorous Councils may be amply experienced.

I remain

Sir

Charlotte Street
Portland Place
9th June 1785.

With the greatest respect
Your most obliged Servant
(Signed) GEORGE FORSTER

A MEMORANDUM ON THE PANJAB AND KANDAHAR

from Mr. (John) Griffiths to Alexander Adamson
dated Surat, 17th February, 1794.

containing information respecting

- (i) *the Characters of the Inhabitants on the Banks of the Indus*
- (ii) *Dominions of the Seecks*
- (iii) *Kandahar of the Dominion of the Durraniess*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The memorandum of Mr John Griffiths written in the form of a letter to Mr Alexander Adamson from Surat on February 17, 1794, gives us a fair idea of the Panjab (including Multan) and Kandahar of those days. The former then formed the dominion of the Sikhs and the latter of the Durranis.

The writer of the Memorandum, John Griffiths, was for some time Resident at Basra factory in Iraq and then the chief of the Surat Factory in India. It was during his time at Surat that he wrote this letter to Alexander Adamson at Bombay giving him information respecting the characters of the inhabitants on the banks of the Indus, including those of Multan, and of the dominion of the Sikhs in the Panjab and of the Durranis in south-eastern Afghanistan. The East India Company was then concerned more with commerce than politics. It is, therefore, that the letter deals more with geographical and commercial information and refers to the characters of the people only as far as they concerned a businessman. Mr. Griffiths acted as governor of Bombay for about four months from September 3 to December 27, 1795.

Alexander Adamson, to whom the letter is addressed, is mentioned in the *Index to the Press Lists of Public Department Records, 1748-1800*, as Assistant to Treasurer, Bombay, and Transfer Master, Bombay.

Patiala,
September 29, 1961.

GANDA SINGH

I. CHARACTERS OF THE INHABITANTS ON THE BANKS OF THE INDUS

The River Sind or Indus is well known to be formed by the confluence of ten subordinate Streams, issuing chiefly from among the Mountains of the greater and lesser Tibet. It traverses a Tract of Country, near six hundred and fifty British Miles in direct length, from the Station of Attok, to it's disemboguement in the Arabian Sea.

The Manners and Disposition of the People, who occupy its Banks, are perhaps as various as the face of the Country, which they inhabit. The slightest information on the subject of it's present Political and Commercial State hitherto, in general but obscurely known, may be considered not entirely unworthy of Attention.

This is the object of the following Notes.

Unfortunately, the only light we are enabled to throw upon the Business, is derived principally from the verbal relation of Natives, who, from the habit of observing but superficially, things that do not interest them, are sometimes faithful, but seldom accurate in their representations ; In one point of view, however, we may venture to give implicit credit to the following circumstances, namely, so far as they relate to Commercial Produce.

Sind, or Sindh

The Province of Sind, comprehending the Delta of the Indus called Tattah, extends along the Sea Coast, from the Confines of Kutch, to the Western Branch of the Sind about 170 Miles, and along that River towards Multan ; to Behkker,¹ about 300 Miles. It is at present a Government tributary to Salem Shah, the Son and Successor of Timmur Shah Durrani, King of Kandahar and Kabul, who died about the middle of 1792 ; Futtah Ally the Surdaar of the Province, and who has held possession near 20 years, resides at Nagure Tattah, in the general defalcation of the Empire of Dehly, he wrested it from Gulaam Shah, the Moghul's Subahdar ; But a report is now prevailing that a force is advancing from Kandahar to remove him, and establish a Relation of Gulaam Shah's in his Room.

The Subjects of this Chief are composed of various casts, Mahomedans and Hindus ; Of the latter, are Brahmins, Katries, Banians, Jaats, and Koolis. The Jaats are said to observe some institutions similar to the Seiks, wear their Hair and Beards in the same manner, and are part of the same People, who under Swrudge Mul,² &c., formerly possessed many of the Countries in the North of India, now in the hands of Scindia and the Mahrattas. Of the Mahomedans, are both Moghuls and Belouhtries.³ These last are that race of Men, commonly known in the middle parts of Hindostan by the name of Sindians ; of much estimation in the Indian Armies, warlike, but untractably

1. Bhakkar, headquarters of a sub-division and a *tahsil* of the same name in the district of Mianwali, Panjab, Pakistan.

2. Sooraj Mall (died in 1763), son of Thakur Badan Singh, founder of the ruling house of Bharatpur.

3. Beluchis or Baloch, people of Baluchistan.

averse to discipline ; They were also formerly well known on the Coast of Mekraan, or rather Laar ; to the former, their Country is contiguous, for their thievish, inhospitable, and treacherous disposition to the Voyagers who touched upon that Coast.

The principal places in the Country are as follows ; Nagur Tattah, the Capital Heiderabad ; Sind an open Town 70 Coss above Tattah ; Rhodabad Purana or the old Rodabad Rhodabad nawa, or the new ; Rambunder, Shahabad, Ammerkote, probably that marked in the Map, in the Desert of Kutch, Mittankote, Karaly, Bunder, Aomarkote, Hujraat, Shaherabad, and Behkker. This last was formerly a place of some strength and importance, and the Capital of considerable Territory, but is now like most others in this unhappy Country, falling to ruins ; the Historian of the first ten years of the Reign of Aurungzebe, mentions the Fort of Bhakur, as a place of strength, into which the accomplished but unfortunate Dara Shegoh⁴ threw some of his Women and Treasure, in his distressful flight towards Kutch. Below this Place about 25 Coss, the same Historian says, there is a Road leading towards Kandahar, which the afflicted Prince was inclined to follow, and which probably would have rescued him from the fate, with which he afterwards met, but the entreaties of his Women, terrified with the idea of the difficulties they expected to encounter on that Road, and the fortune of his crafty and victorious Brother prevailing, he continued his Flight down the Indus.

The Country is described at that time to have been for the most part Jungul, or Forest on both Sides the River from Bhakur to Suvestaan, another Port about half way between Bhakur and the Forks of the Indus, which obliged Aurungzebe's Generals to relinquish the pursuit ; There exists but little reason to suppose that the Country is much improved since that period.

The Manufactures of the Country are all sorts of white and coloured Piece Goods. Here also are bred, excellent Horses for Cavalry, Camels, and Horned Cattle in abundance ; the Soil produces Grain of Sorts, Cotton, Indigo, Sugar, Saltpetre, *Hing* or Assafatida, with fruits of various kinds.

The prevailing Color of Apparel of the Inhabitants is Black or rather dark Blue. They receive in importation from Gujraat &ca. Silk, Nutmegs, Cloves, Mace, Amber, Copper, Oil, Teakwood, planks &c.

The Surdaar maintains, it is said, a considerable Body of Horse and foot, but of the Revenue, by which he is enabled to support them, no probable estimate can be formed.

At Strikaarpoor,⁵ opposite to Behkker, commences a Track of Country Adjacent to both sides of the River in the hands of the Dadoopootra⁶—a people who form a lawless Banditti, principally Faquiers, have of late years established themselves into a permanent Government, under their Chieftain Bhavel Khawn⁷ ; Some distance above Behkker, and reckoned midway between Multan and Tattah, is their Capital Bhavilpoor⁸ ;

4. Dara Shikoh (1615-1659), son of Emperor Shah Jahan and a brother of Aurangzeb.

5. Shikarpur.

6. Daoopotra.

7. Bahawal Khan.

8. Bahawpus.

At this place, the Kabul Merchants are permitted to pass their Horses, and from hence they cross the Desert to Bukanur,⁹ about 70 Coss distance ; At this place also, the Gagra, (*queri*, Kaggar)¹⁰ a River of considerable width a depth, empties itself into the Indus. Strikaarpoor⁵ is a very considerable Mart for Horses ; The Country altho' in rather a wild State, is represented to be extremely populous and full of Villages. The Dadoopootra⁶ acknowledge themselves tributary to Salem Shah. From the Character of these People, the communication between Multan and the Sea must prove exceedingly precarious, and sometimes totally impracticable, and perhaps this is the best reason that can be offered, why the Merchants in general from the South East of Persia, Cabul, &c., to refer to fatiguing and circuitous land Journey by Jaudpoor¹¹ &c., in their way to the West of India, and relinquish the advantage of a noble River, navigable for Vessels of 20 and 50 Tons, nearly as high up as it's confluence with the Sutlooje.¹² We have reason to conlude this Country the least explored by the English, of any in India.

Multan

Proceeding up the Indus from Bhavilpoor, we pass through the same difficult Country on both sides the River, and the Bone of Continual Contention between the Officers of Salem Shah, the Dadoopootra, and the Seick,¹³ to Sidpoor,¹⁴ in the possession of the latter, about 40 Coss below the City of Multan.

The City of Multan with the principal part of the Peninsula of Outch, was taken from the Seick about 15 years ago by Timmur Shah the Durrani, to whose Son and Successor Salam Shah, it is still subject. It is estimated about 500 Coss from Dehly, and 250 from Lahore ; It is situated about 3 Coss from the Chunnah or Chunnaab¹⁵ ; The Fort, garrisoned by Salem Shah's Patans, is said to be washed by that River when flooded. The City is falling fast to Ruins, inhabited by Mahomedans and Hindoos, and Seeck, which last it would appear are daily gaining ground in this part of India.

The Manufactures are Piece Goods, white Cloths, and Chintz of all sorts. The adjacent Country produces various kinds of Grain, also Cotton and Indigo, and fruits, &c.

It receives by Importation, Pearl, Kincobs,¹⁶ Gold Thread, Elephants Teeth, Broad Cloths, Nutmegs, Cloves, Mace, Copper, Vermilion &c, and Drugs.

II. DOMINIONS OF THE SEECKS

This extraordinary modern People is in possession of nearly the whole of the fertile Country of the Punjaab, with the Territory South Eastward of the Sutlooje¹² as far as

9. Bikaner.

10. Ghanggar river, once an affluent of the Indus, is no longer a perennial stream and is lost in the sandy desert of Rajasthan near Hamumangarh (former Bhatner) in the Bikaner territory.

11. Jodhpur, formerly headquarters of a princely state of the same name.

12. Satluj or Sutlej, ancient Studri.

13. Sikh, spelt as Seick, Seek, Seeck, Seik, Sich, Sick, Sicque, Syc, etc.

14. Sitpur (Seetpore), a small town in the Muzaffargarh district of the Panjab, Pakistan.

15. Chenab.

16. *Kimkhāb*, *kamkhāb*, embroidered cloth.

Karnaal, the Scene of Nadir Shah's decisive Victory over the Armies of Mahomed Shah of Dehly, being in extent, from Attok to Karnaal, about 420 Miles, and from Rotass Gur (belonging to Salem Shah) to the Scene of their Contests with the Dadoo-pootra on the Indus, (excepting the Territory of Oucth) about 300 Miles.

Their Capital is the celebrated City of Lahore on the Raavee ; Their principal Chiefs, if they can be said to acknowledge any, are four, namely ; Lena Sing, Goojer Sing, Diwan Sing, and Maha Sing. It may not perhaps be deemed amiss, to offer in this place, what circumstances we have been able to collect, relating to this eccentric Class of Mankind.

They are said to have received their Tenets from a Hindoo of the Kutru¹⁷ caste, of the name of Nanuk, a Fanatic in the reign of the Emperor Aurungzebe.¹⁸ This Man having long led the Life of an Ascetic,¹⁹ pretended to have received a divine revelation to the following effect ;

"Baba Nanuk eici horon jeici Nunne doo"

that is nearly expressing,

"Nanuk, have the same Dependence on the
"Creator, as the tender blade of Grass,
"which receives its nourishment from the
"dew of heaven".

This he looked upon as an order to divest himself of obedience to all human Authority, and was consequently an object of long persecution to that Emperor, who had him confined in a strong Cage.²⁰ This had the ordinary effect of persecution, tho increasing the number of his followers. The Seick, in the performance of the religious Ceremonies, always invoke the name of their Founder Baba Nanuk, whom they also call their Guru, and frequently reiterate the Word Bhalden.²¹ The Tenets of Nanuk have been collected into a Book, which they call their Ghiruntejee,²² and guard as a sacred Deposit, or rather Oracle, at a place called Amber Ser,²³ two and twenty Coss in the Dehly side of Lahore ; Here they assemble in great numbers (150, or 200,000 Men) at two fixed periods of the year, about October and April, to consult upon their Warlike Operations ; The decisions of the Oracle, whether for War or Peace, they invariably adhere to. Their Book, they declare, contains a prediction that "The Europeans will one day be

17. Khatri.

18. Nanak (1469-1539), the Sikh Guru, founder of the Sikh religion, lived during the reign of the Lodhis and the early Mughals, Babur and Humayun, and not during the reign Aurangzeb (1658-1707).

19. Guru Nanak did not lead the life of an ascetic, nor does his religion, Sikhism' preach or encourage asceticism. He was a married man and had two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das.

20. It was the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675) who was imprisoned and executed by the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb.

21. Not clear. The Sikhs generally repeat the words *Sat-nām* and *Wāhigurū*.

22. *Granth-ji*, popularly known as *Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

23. Amritsar.

in possession of Dehly".²⁴ This probably the Oracle, or rather the Interpreter of the Oracle, has suggested to keep suspicion awake.

The Seiks receive Proselytes of almost every Cast, a point in which they differ most materially from the Hindoos. To initiate Mahomedans into their mysteries, they prepare a Dish of Hog's legs,²⁵ which the Converts are obliged to partake of previous to admission. They have forbid absolutely the use of the Hookah, but they are as liberal in the use of Bang, and Ophiam,²⁶ as their Neighbours. They are not prohibited the use of Animal food of any kind, excepting Beef, which they are rigidly scrupulous in abstaining from. They never shave either Head or Beard; They sometimes wear yellow, but the prevailing Colour of their Cloaths is deep blue; They make their Turbans capaciously large, over which they frequently wear a piece of pliable Iron Chain or Net work.

They are in general excellently mounted, and have a Body of thirty or forty thousand chosen Horse, always stationed along the Attok, to frustrate the Attempts of the Durrani or Abdallis, to whom they are inveterate Enemies, and by whom on two sides they are surrounded. The remainder of the Nation is dispersed all over their Dominions, without Order or Restraint. Their mode of making War is desultory, seldom attacking in large Bodies, and to sum up all we can at present learn concerning this strange people, they have the Character of being rather mild and benignant than otherwise, in their interior Government, and if it be true, what hath been confidently asserted, that the fundamental principle of their Religion is the Worship of the one Supreme God of the Universe, we may safely venture to give them credit for many of the good Qualities of Humanity.

24. This prophecy is not contained in the holy book of the Sikhs, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is ascribed to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, who is said to have told Emperor Aurangzeb in 1675 in answer to the charge of looking in the direction of the Imperial zenana: 'I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down thy *pardas* and destroy thine empire.' (*Sikh Religion*, preface, xviii.)

It has at times been said that this prophecy was the invention of some clever Englishman in 1857 to win over the Sikhs to the British side during the mutiny, when Bahadur Shah II, a descendant of Emperor Aurangzeb, was being raised to the throne of Hindusthan. But the prophecy has been referred to, though in a slightly different form, by Colonel A.L.H. Polier in his *Account of the Sikhs*, written in 1780 and read at a meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (now the Asiatic Society, Calcutta) on December 20, 1787. References to the prophecy by Polier in 1780 and by Griffiths in 1794, eighty-seven and sixty-three years respectively before the Indian Mutiny, conclusively explode the theory of its invention by some Englishman in 1857.

25. There never was any such practice followed by the Sikhs. The meat of a hog is, of course, not forbidden to the Sikhs. And, if at any time a dish of hog's legs was offered to a new convert, it should not be taken as a general practice among the Sikhs to force a convert to partake of it to regularize his admission to the Sikh brotherhood.

26. The use of *bhang* and opium is not religiously forbidden to the Sikhs but it is not encouraged. In fact, it is positively discouraged.

Their places of greatest consideration, after the Capital Lahore, are said to be as follows ; Amberser, their place of Religious visitation as mentioned above ; Kalanoor, Batala, among the Hills South East of Lahore ; Sersamaana ;²⁷

Jwalajee,²⁸ a place of pilgrimage of the Hindoos, 150 Coss from Dehly among the Hills, where there is a subterranean fire, and from which Aurungzebe thought to have procured Sulphur ;

Shahdowla Gujraat, 40 Coss from Lahore, famous for a Manufacture of excellent Sword blades, and Matchlock pieces ;

Jalendurr ;

Puttealah ;

Pehooah ;

Kwlehittur,²⁹ &c ; and,

Karnaal, 40 Coss from Dehly.

They have a considerable Military Station at Attok, but it is said, unfortified.

The principal Manufactures of Lahore, are Kilmaans, a kind of coarse, or blanket Shawls, made of the Wool of the Tails of certain Sheep,—White Cloths fine and coarse, Piece Goods.—The Punjaab produces Grain of all sorts known in India, Cotton, Indigo, Jaggree and a variety of Fruits.

They receive in importation from Gujraat Pearl, Kincobs,¹⁶ Gold thread, Cutnic, Elephants' Teeth, Broad Cloths, Nutmegs, Cloves, Mace, Cardamums, Amber, Dry dates, Iron, Lead, Copper Vermilion, Coconuts, &c and Drugs.

III. Kandahar or the Dominion of the Durraniës

The left Bank of the Indus, coming from the Sea Coast, as high up as the parallel of Kashmeer, is almost entirely in the hands of Salem Shah Durrani, and the Chiefs tributary to him, and Eastward of the Attok he skirts the Seick Nation to some distance beyond the Territory of Jamboo.³⁰ A reference to Major Rennels incomparable Map will afford a pretty clear idea of the importance of this Frontier, to whatever Power may be in possession of it.

This formidable Kingdom was founded about forty eight years ago by Ahmed Khawn Abdalli, one of Nader Shah's principal Officers.

Mirza Mehadi relates in his History of Nader Shah, that in the confusion which followed the Murder of that Prince (Hiz.-1160) the Afghan and Oozbek Troops assembled together from the different Quarters of the Camp, under Ahmed Khawn, who from the warmth of his Attachment to the House of his deceased Master, determined to avenge his Death, but being repulsed by the Assharians and consequently frustrated in his design,

27. Not clear. May be Samānā to the south-west of Patiala.

28. Jwālā-mukhī in the district of Kangra, Panjab, India.

29. Kurukshetra.

30. Jammu.

he drew off the Afghans, and retreated to the Fortress of Kandahar, where embracing the opportunity offered by the troubles which afterwards desolated Persia, he assumed the Chuttur, or Ensign of Royalty, under the name of Ahmed Shah, well known from the dreadful overthrow he gave the united powers of the Mahratta Empire about 28 years ago, on the Plains of Paniput.³¹

He was succeeded about 3 years after that Battle by his Son Timmur Shah,³² who assumed the Title of Durra-Durrani,³³ or Pearl of the Durranies ; the latter is the name by which he distinguished a Corps of Household Troops, which consisted originally of Abyssinian Slaves, raised by contribution among his Subjects, and probably constituted on the same principles with the Mamluki of Egypt. From an Ornament which they wore in their Ears, they received the Appellation of Durrani.³⁴ They at first amounted to no more than two or three thousand, but latterly they were augmented to twelve and even twenty thousand Men, the Flower of the Shah's Armies, and particularly intrusted with the Guard of the Royal Person. Timmer Shah died about the middle of 1792.

A younger Brother was preparing to dispute the Sovereign Authority with Salem Shah, the present Monarch, but by the timely mediation of some of the Moghul Chieftains, the matter was prudently compromised, without having recourse to the sword ; Salem Shah was placed upon his Father's Throne, and his Brother was satisfied with the Government of Kabul, where he resides.

Salem Shah is in possession of Guezni, Kabul, Peishour, Kandahaar, and some Territories on the Persian Side, being a considerable part of the Dominions of the celebrated and victorious Mahmud Subuktegnim.³⁵

On the South East Side of the Attok, he possesses the delicious and wealthy Province of Kashmeer, the paradise of India, and the only Country in the World where the universally admired Shawl is manufactured. This inimitable Article is, it is said, produced from the Fleece of an Animal called Bhera, or a Species of Sheep or Goat, subsisting on the Mountain Fruits peculiar to the Country. On that side also, he is Master of the rich Territory of Jamboo, described as nearly as inaccessible as Kashmeer ; In this quarter he is also in possession of the important Fortress of Rotass Gur,³⁶ with most of the strong holds on the Hilly Frontier of the Seicks, with whom he is in a state of perpetual Hostility. The Revenues he collects at this day from the two Provinces of Kashmeer and Jamboo only, amount, it is said, to two or three Million Sterling.

31. The battle of Panipat was fought on January 14, 1761, thirty-three years before the date of this letter.

32. Timur Shah came to the throne of Afghanistan in 1772 after the death of his father, Ahmed Shah Durrani, twelve years after the battle of Panipat.

33. The title *Durrani* was, to begin with, adopted by Timur Shah's father Ahmed Shah on his being raised to the throne of Afghanistan in 1747.

34. The appellation was given to Ahmed Shah by his patron-saint Nabir Shah who called him *Durri-i-Durrān*, the pearl of pearls.

35. Mahmud of Ghazni (997-1030) was the son of Nasir-ud-Din Sabuktgin (977-997).

36. The fort of Rohtas in the district of Jhelum, Pakistan.

Salem Shah Durrani resides alternately at Kandahar & Kabul, at the former in the Heats, and the latter in the cold Season, when the Mountains are covered with Snow.

His Military Establishment consists chiefly of Horse, to the number, it is said, of about 150,000; His Foot he does not hold in much esteem, only employing them to garrison his Fortresses; And very happily, we do not hear that his Equipment of Artillery is by any means respectable.

His Cavalry are all excellently mounted, incomparably superior to any that can be brought to oppose them from Hindoostan. The impression of Terror left on the minds of the Mahrattas, by the fatal Carnage at Paniput, is so indelible, that it is pretty generally believed they will hardly, if ever, be again prevailed upon to sustain the charge of the Abdallis; among many instances of the prevalence of this sentiment of dread, it is related, a Mahratta is not ashamed, if his horse should happen to start when drinking water, to exclaim, "dost thou see the Shadow of an Abdalli"?

In fact, (it is far from an unreasonable conjecture,) this is the real cause, to which we are to attribute the unremitting attention paid by Scindia, of late years, to the improvement of his Artillery and Infantry, for the Alarm, that the Shah is advancing, is as regular at Dehly, as the Revolutions of the Seasons, and it would appear from recent Accounts, that the period is not very distant, when that will certainly come to pass. A Son of Shah Alum, the present Shadow of the Moghul Emperors, has disappeared for some years past; it is now confidently reported, that he has found an Assylum with the Durrani. There is scarce a single dissenting opinion among the Natives, but whenever Salem Shah actually puts his Armies in motion towards Dehly, that unfortunate City will once more be abandoned to it's fate, and not improbably the greatest portion of the North of India.

It perhaps interests us materially to reflect, that if this Prince knew how to reap the advantages, which he might derive from his resources, from the warlike and intrepid Characters of his Subjects, from the opening of a safe Port in the Indus, for the Importation of Arms and Military Stores, we may have solid reasons for apprehending another inundation of Tartars; Happy for our Settlements in Bengal, that they have the Ganges to oppose to them!

The Province of Kabul is esteemed peculiarly productive; it's breed of Horses is perhaps equal to any in the World, for the purpose of Cavalry; As an instance of the celerity and expedition, with which they can travel, it is said, that after the Capture of Dehly, Ahmed Shah marched a Body of his Horse, from Bultun Gur³⁷ (15 Coss from Dehly) to Muthra, a distance of about 50 Coss, in one Night; in consequence of which rapid March, the wretched City was surprised, and left to the Mercy of a barbarous Soldiery.

The Inhabitants of Salem Shah's Dominions are principally Mahomedans, with some Hindoos, who have adopted the Institutions of Baba Manuk, and are called Kratri.³⁸

37. Garh Muktesar in the Hapur tahsil of Meerut district in the U.P.

38. They were not called Khatri but Sikhs after they adopted the religion of Baba (Guru) Nanak. Khatri or Kshatri is the name of a Hindu caste.

The Manufactures are, Shawls, Kelmaans or Blanket Shawls, Woollen Cloths, and Blankets.

The Soil produces Grain, and various sorts of Fruit, excellent in their kind, particularly Melons and Pomegranates. Their Horses are exported in considerable Numbers, by Joudpoor, Jesselmur, and Bickaneat, as mentioned above, to different parts of India.

They receive in return, from Gujrat, &c., Pearl, Indigo, Nutmegs, Cloves Saffron, Pepper, Bettlenut, Copper, Lead, Drugs, &c. &c.

N. B. The Coss are calculated at nearly one and a half English Miles each.

VIII THE SIKHS AND THEIR COUNTRY

(1798-1803)

by

WILLIAM FRANCKLIN

INTRODUCTORY

William Francklin (1763-1839), from whose writings the following extracts about the Sikhs have been taken, was a talented writer. He was the eldest son of Thomas Francklin and was born in 1763. He was educated at Westminister and Trinity College, Cambridge. Accepted as a cadet in 1781, and admitted on September 9, 1782, he entered the service of the East India Company as an Ensign on January 31, 1783, and was attached to the Bengal Native Infantry. In January 1786 he was granted furlough to travel to Persia and he published his journal on return from that country. On December 20, 1789, he became Lieutenant and was promoted to Captiancy on September 30, 1803.

It was during this period that he wrote his two well known books, *History of Reign of Shah Aulum*, published in 1798, and *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, published in 1803. Both of these works, in several places, contain references to the Sikhs and their country. I have extracted such of them as contain continuous accounts of the rise and progress of the Sikhs and of their customs, manners and resources, and of the trade in the Panjab. Occasional references to their struggles and relations with the Mughals and the Marathas, and with George Thomas, have not been torn from their context. The inquisitive students of history may consult them in the original books.

As Francklin himself admits, he was not able to collect first hand information about the religion of the Sikhs. He had not even seen James Browne's book, published ten years before his *History of the Reign of Shah Aulum* was issued. His source of information in most cases was George Thomas who, much against his wish, had not been successful in planting the British flag on the bank of the Sutlej.

As an unsuccessful adventurer, frustrated in his political designs upon the Sikhland, Thomas could not have made an objective study of the Sikhs and their ways, to be conveyed to his biographer. In spite of it, as William Francklin and his informant were contemporary observers, their accounts have their own special value.

Becoming a Major in March 1810, Francklin rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in December 1814 when he was transferred from the 19th Native Infantry to the 22nd. He was the Deputy Paymaster at chunar in 1805-08, and was appointed Regulating Officer of Invalid Tannah Establishments in 1808. He was transferred to Bhagalpur as Regulating Officer in 1814, and he stayed there up to December 1825 when he retired after forty-three years' service.

Although a soldier by profession, William Francklin was a man of letters and a distinguished scholar of oriental languages and literature. He was for a long time a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and made several learned contributions in the form of translations and original papers to the Asiatic Researches. Besides his journal of Persian travels and *The History of the Reign of Shah-Aulum* and *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, referred to above, he published his *Inquiry Concerning the Site of the Ancient Palibothra, 1815-1822*. After his retirement he returned to England where he became a member of the Council and Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society, London. He died on April 12, 1839, aged 76.

Patiala

GANDA SINGH

October 28, 1961

THE SIKHS AND THEIR COUNTRY

(A)*

THE SIKHS

To the Seiks, among others, may be assigned an interesting station, obscure in their origin, in a remote part of the province of Lahooor, this tribe had nothing but novelty to recommend itself or attract notice.

In the reign of the Emperor Baber, Nanick Shah, founder of the tribe, was born at a small village named Tulbindee,¹ in the province of Lahooor; at an early period of life, this extraordinary person, who possessed a good capacity and amiable manners, forsook the world, and devoted himself to a life of religious austerity. In this recluse state, aided by the effusions of a fervid imagination, Nanick framed a system of religion, composed from the speculative and contemplative theories of Mussulman divinity,² which he delivered

* From William Franklin's *The History of the Reign of Shah Aulum*.

1. Talwandi, nor called Nankana Sahib, in the district of Sheikhupura, West Pakistan.

2. Though he was born in a Hindu family and had spent his youth in Muslim atmosphere. Guru Nanak was an independent thinker. 'There is neither a Hindu, nor a Musulman,' said he, but they all belonged to one fraternity, brotherhood of man.

to his numerous followers as of divine origin. Ths book he termed *Gurrunt*,³ which, in the Punjabee dialect, implied scriptural. Nanick, after reaching his ninetieth year, expired peaceably, and was buried at Amrit Seer, where his tomb⁴ to the present day attracts the attention, and animates the piety of his numerous disciples. He left two children, Lucsmi Doss and Sree Chund.

At his death, Nanick Shah, with a view to render permanent his new system, ordained that the succession should be elective and not hereditary, an ordination which, as it precluded the supreme authority from remaining in one family, placed the benevolent and disinterested views of the founder in a light truly amiable. Sree Chund, who found means to secure his election,⁵ presided over the tribe for several years, and, at his death, Angadjee⁶ succeeded. But this custom, though it obtained for some time, was at length set aside, and Gooroo Ram was the first who established an hereditary succession.

The tribe continuing to increase by the vast number of converts which it had acquired, had not hitherto attracted the notice of the neighbouring powers ; occupied in paying a scrupulous adherence to the laws and ordinations of their founder, the Seiks were looked upon as harmless, inoffensive devotees ; but the period was at hand when they were to act a different part, and to contend with vigour against imperial authority. Teigh Bahadur, whose actions and misfortunes render his name memorable, was the first who took up arms against the officers of Aurengzeeb, till after many bloody encounters with the king's troops, he was at length overcome, taken prisoner, and put to death.⁷ His successors, animated by revenge, continued a predatory war with the descendants of Aurengzeeb, and, during the struggle, the Seiks acquired a considerable addition of territory.⁸ Among the most memorable of these chiefs, was Bundah, who, after a long and severe contest, was taken prisoner, carried to Delhi, and there suffered with heroic fortitude an ignominious death.*

3. *Granth*, called *Guru Granth Sahib* by the Sikhs.

4. On his death in 1539, Guru Nanak eas cremated on the right bank of the river Ravee at a place called Kartarpur, now in Pakistan, apposite to the town of Dera Baba Nanak, India, which lies on the other side of the river. The Sikh temple at Amritsar does not contain any tomb either of Guru Nanak or of any other Guru. Guru Nanak at the age of 70.

5. Sri Chand, son of Guru Nanak, took to the life of an ascetic and never sought election to Guruship.

6. Guru Angad (1539-1552) succeeded Guru Nanak, and not Sri Chand, who never acted as Guru.

7. It was Guru Hargobind (1606-45), and not Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675) who for the first time took up arms against the officers of Shahjahan.

8. The Sikh Gurus conquered or acquired no territory during their struggle against Shahjahan or Aurangzeb.

* See particular account of this enterprising chief in Captain Scott's second volume of the *History of Deccan*, Article *Furrok Seer*.

[Banda Singh was not one of the Gurus, but only a commander of the forces, of Sikhs after the death of the tenth and the last Guru Gobinda Singh. GS.]

In the reign of Ahumud Shah⁹ the tribe became very formidable. Profiting by the disturbances which then prevailed in every part of the empire, the Seiks again made head against the government, and with far better success. They conquered the whole of the Punjab, (or country included within the five rivers which fall into the Indus) and even pushed their arms beyond it.

In the last reign (Aulum Geer, the Second)¹⁰ their dominions were bounded on the west by the country of Cabul, and extended eastward to the vicinity of Delhi, north by a range of high mountains, and to the south-west they embraced the province of Moultan and the city of Tatta, situated on the banks of the Indus, Lahooor, the capital of Punjab, was selected as their chief city of residence, and as such has since continued. They possess many large towns, and among the principle are those of Puttiali, Hurrial (Karnat), Loeh Ghur (?) Serhind, Shahabad, and Tanasser. The Seik territories are said to contain prodigious quantities of cattle, horses, oxen, cows, and sheep ; and grain of various kinds is produced in abundance. The precious metals are very scarce ; and their trade is for that reason chiefly carried on by barter, especially in the manufacturing towns.

At Pattiali they make excellent cloth, and fire arms superior to most parts of Hindostaun. The collected force of the Seiks is immense, they being able to bring into the field an army of 250,000* men, a force apparently terrific, but, from want of union among themselves, not much to be dreaded by their neighbours. Divided into distinct districts, each chief rules over the portion appropriated to him with uncontroled sway ; and tenacious of his authority, and jealous of his brethren, it seldom happens that this nation makes an united effort.

The Seiks are armed with a spear, scymetar, and excellent matchlock. Their horses are strong, very patient under hardship, and undergo incredible fatigue. The men are accustomed to charge on full gallop, on a sudden they stop, discharge their pieces with

9. Emperor Ahmed Shah, 1748-1754.

10. Alamgir II, 1754-1759.

* The following table, which was delivered to the author by a Seik chief when at Pannepat in 1793-4, will exhibit the situation of the different chiefs at that period.

	Men
Beejee Sing [Baghel Singh] - - - - -	12,000
Tarah Sing - - - - -	22,000
Jessah Sing - - - - -	14,000
Kurrum Sing (of Shahabad) - - - - -	12,000
Jessah Sing (of Ramghur) - - - - -	12,000
Jundut Sing [Charhat Singh Bhangi] (of Amrit Seer) - - -	24,000
Khosal Sing (of Fuzoolah Pore) - - - - -	22,000
Herri Sing (on the confines of Moultan) - - - - -	40,000
Runjet Sing (of Loch Ghur) - - - - -	70,000
Shahur Sing [Sahib Singh] (of Pattiali), Lall Sing,	
Juswaunt Sing (of Nawbeh), [Nabha] Gujput Sing (of Chunda)	
[Sind], and other chiefs. - - - - -	20,000
	<hr/> Total 248,000

a deliberate aim, when suddenly wheeling about, after performing three or four turns, they renew the attack. The shock is impressive when offered only to infantry, but against artillery they cannot stand. It is a fact well known and established, that a few field pieces is sufficient to keep in check their most numerous bodies. Inured from their infancy to the hardships of a military life, the Seiks are addicted to predatory warfare, in a manner peculiar to themselves alone. When determined to invade a neighbouring province, they assemble at first in small numbers on the frontier, when having first demanded the *raki*¹¹ or tribute, if it be complied with, they retire peaceably, but when this is denied, hostilities commence, and the Seiks in their progress, are accustomed to lay waste the country on all sides, carrying along with them as many of the inhabitants as they can take prisoners, and all the cattle.* The prisoners are detained as slaves, unless redeemed by a pecuniary compensation. But though fond of plunder, the Seiks, in the interior parts of their country, preserve good order, and a regular government : and the cultivation of their lands is attended with much assiduity. Their revenues are collected at two stated periods of six months each ; and by an equitable adjustment between the proprietor and cultivator, the latter is allowed a fifth¹² part as the reward of his labour.

Of their religion much information has not as yet been acquired ; but it has been remarked by an ingenious and spirited historian, that in the act of receiving proselytes, they compel them to the performance of an act equally abhorrent to the principles of the Hindoo or Mahomedan faith.† Yet, notwithstanding the nature of their ceremonies, it is certain they continue to gain numerous converts.

The Seiks, in their person, are tall, and of a manly erect deportment ; their aspect is ferocious, their eyes piercing and animated ; and in tracing their features a striking resemblance is observable to the Arabs who inhabit the banks of the Euphrates. The dress of the males consists of a coarse cloth of the blue cotton, thrown loosely over the shoulders, and coming down between the legs, is confined round the waist by a belt of cotton. An ample turban of blue cloth covers the head, and over this is frequently wore a sash of silk and cotton mixed, resembling both in colour and pattern a Scotch *Tartan*. They speak the Aufghaun or Poosh to language,¹³ with prolific additions of Persian, Arabic, and Hindoozee††.

11. Protection money.

* The alarm once excited in the British government of the formidable power of this nation, might be obviated by observing that the discordant and clashing interests of the respective Seik chiefs prevent almost the possibility of a general union ; and even if disposed to attack the territory of our ally, the vizir, they would be necessitated to keep a watchful eye over their own territories, which would be left open to invasion from the north. It is well known that Zemaun Shah, the king of Cabul, is desirous of sharing in the fertile province of Punjab, and especially of getting possession of Lahoor, emphatically termed the key of Hindostun. His late attack at the end of 1796, is a proof of this assertion.

12. Not one fifth, but two fifths, known as *Panj Dowanji*.

† By obliging the Mussulmaun to drink water, in which some Seiks have washed their feet, mixed with hog's blood, and Hindoo with that of cow. See Captain Scott, Vol. II article Furrok Seer.

13. Except in the Afghan territories beyond the Indus, the Sikhs spoke the Panjab language.

† † In the year 1793-4, the author was at Panneput in company with Major Charles Reynolds, of the

(B) *

*Geographical Description of The PUNJAB, and an Account of
The SEIKS, Their Manners, Customs, Forces and Resources*

THE extensive and fertile country, described by Arrian and other ancient Historians, as comprehended within the five great rivers, the Hydaspes, the Hydraotes, the Acesines, the Hyphasis and the Sutledge, is, by modern geographers, denominated Punjab.

On the north it is bounded by the mountains inhabited by the tribe called Yoosuf Zey ; on the east by the mountains of Naun,¹ Serinnaghur and Jumbo ; on the west by the river Sind or Attock^{*} ; and on the south by the districts of Panniput, and the province of Harrianah. It is 250 *cosses* from north to south, and nearly 100 from east to west. Notwithstanding the state of warfare in which the chiefs of Punjab are constantly involved, the country is in a state of high cultivation ; and though the population be great, grain is cheaper than in any other part of India. This advantage in a great measure, is derived from the numerous rivers, by which it is watered. Advancing from the south, a traveller meets, in rapid succession, the Sersooty, the Cugger, the Chowah and the Sutledge.²

The Sersooty after passing the towns of Moostufabad, Shahabad and Tehnasser, and overflowing the country on each of its banks, joins itself to the Cugger to the north-west of Kaythul.

The Cugger, on the contrary, after passing the towns of Bunnoor, Seyfabad,³ Puttialah, Jowhana and Jomalpore, enters the country of the Batties at the town of Arwah,⁴ formerly the capital of the district. The Chowah, in like manner, after passing through an extensive tract of country which it fertilizes and enriches, is finally lost in the sands of Sonaum.

The Pnjab yields to not part of India ; in fertility of soil, it produces in the greatest abundance sugar cane, wheat, barley, rice, pulse of all sorts, tobacco and various

Bombay establishment, employed by the British government on a survey through the *Doo Ab* : the result of which, when communicated to the public, will no doubt prove a valuable addition to the geography already acquired. At that time he saw a body of Seiks then in the service of the great Sindiah ; they were about one thousand in number, under the command of Doolchee Sing, from whose brother most of the information above mentioned was received. The author has to apologise for giving a sketch so imperfect, though he is happy to learn there is another and far better account already before the public from the late Colonel James Browne, of the Bengal establishment, but which account the author has not seen. The account here given stands merely on his own researches.

* Extracted from *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas.*

1. Nahan.

* This river above the city of Attock is called by the Natives ABASEEN.

2. Ghaggar, *Choah* (which literally means a stream) and Sutlej.

3. Saifabad, which was situated inside the fort of Bahadurgarh, near Patiala, is no longer in existence.

4. The names of some of the places are not clear.

fruits, and it is also well supplied with cattle. The principal manufactures of this country are swords, match-locks, cotton cloths, and silks both coarse and fine.

This nation, if united, could bring into the field from fifty to sixty thousand cavalry, but it is Mr. Thomas's opinion that they will never unite, or be so formidable to their neighbours as they have heretofore been. Internal commotions and civil strife, have of late years generated a spirit of revenge, and disunion among the chiefs, which it will take a long time to overcome.

The number of cavalry, which it is supposed, this nation was able to assemble, has been considerably over-rated, in consequence of a custom, which formerly obtained among the Seiks, of forming an association of their forces, under a particular chief. From this association of their forces, they had the general interests of the community in view. To those who were ignorant of the secret causes of the association, this junction of forces, was frequently mistaken for the army of an individual ; and this error, was perhaps increased by the natural partiality of the Seiks themselves, to magnify the force, and enhance the character of their own nation.

It has been remarked, that the Seiks are able to collect from 50 to 60 thousand horse ; but to render this number effective, those who do not take the field, or who remain at home to guard their possessions, must be included.

Estimating the force of the different districts the aggregate will be seen in the subjoined Schedule.*

By this statement it will appear that the entire force of this nation (exclusive of the district held by Zemaun Shah, eastward of the Attock) can amount to no more than 64,000 men, and of these two thirds might probably take the field, were a chief of experience and enterprize to appear amongst them ; but this in Mr. Thomas's opinion is highly improbable. The chief of most consequence at present is Runjeet Sing. He, having possession of Lahore, which may be termed the capital of the Punjab, has acquired a decided ascendancy over the other chiefs, though he be frequently in a state of warfare with his neighbours, who inhabit that part of the country situated between the Beyah and the Rawee. This chief is deemed by the natives as the most powerful among them. He possesses 1,000 horse which are his own property.

The repeated invasion of the Punjab by small armies of late years, affords a convincing proof that the national force of the Seiks cannot be so formidable as has been

* The districts south of the Sutledge	...	...	...	...	15,000
The Dooab, or country between the Sutledge and Beyah	...				8,000
Between the Beyah and Rowee	...	...	...	...	11,000
Force of Bughezel Sing, chief of Pattialah	...	...	...	...	12,000
The countries above Lahore, the inhabitants of which are chiefly under the influence of Runjeet Sing	...				11,000
To which may be added the force of Nizamaddeen Khan	...				5,000
Rey Elias	...	...	...	...	1,300
Other Patan chiefs, in pay of the Seiks	...	...	...	...	800
					Grand Total
					64,100

represented. Several instances occur in support of this assertion. Not many years since Dara Row Scindia invaded it at the head of 10,000 men, though not more than 6,000 of that number deserved the name of troops, the remainder being a despicable rabble. Tho' joined on his march by two chiefs Buggeel Sing and Kurrun Sing, he was at length opposed by Sahib Sing, the chief of Fyzealpore. That chief was encamped under the walls of Kussoor* having the river Cuggur in his front, was defeated in an engagement, and the ensuing day the fort surrendered. Sahib Sing then agreed to pay the Mahrattas a sum of money and most of the chiefs south of the Sutledge having by this time submitted to Dara Row, opposition was at an end.

It was successively invaded by the armies of Ambajee, Bala Row and Nana Furkiah, who drove the Seiks repeatedly before them.

In 1800 Mr. Thomas himself entered their country at the head of 5,000 troops and 60 pieces of artillery, and though by the instigation of enemies who promised them assistance, the chiefs south of the Sutledge, and in the Dooab (or country between the two rivers† combined against him, yet he penetrated as far as the Sutledge ; during that campaign he never saw more than 10,000 Seiks in one army : he remained in their country six months, two of which were passed without competition, and he finally compelled them to purchase peace.

Of late years the Rajah of Serinnagur has likewise made some conquests in Punjab, chiefly between the Beyah and the Sutledge, and Nizamuddeen Khan, the Patan before mentioned, has also acquired territory yielding a revenue of three lacks of rupees per annum.

The Seiks though united, have never made any considerable opposition against the force of Zemaun Shah who has frequently attacked them, but it may be urged, that a great difference is to be expected from a formidable army of 60,000 men, led on by the Shah in person and the princes the blood, compared with the detached bodies already described. Hence it would appear that this nation is not so formidable as they have been represented, and in all probability they never will be formidable when opposed by regular troops.

The Seiks are armed with a spear, matchlock and scymetar, their method of fighting as described by Mr. Thomas is singular ; after performing the requisite duties of their religion by ablution and prayer, they comb their hair and beards with peculiar care, then mounting their horses, ride forth towards the enemy, with whom they engage in a continued skirmish advancing and retreating, until man and horse become equally fatigued ; they then draw off to some distance from the enemy, and, meeting with cultivated ground, they permit their horses to graze of their own accord, while they parch a little gram for themselves, and after satisfying nature by this frugal repast, if the enemy be near, they provide forage for their cattle, and endeavour to procure a meal for themselves.

* Kusseer, a Fort south of the river Sutludge. [This is not correct. There is no fort by this name to the south of this river]

† The Beyah and the Sutledge.

Seldom indulging in the comforts of a tent, whilst in the enemy's country, the repast of a Seik cannot be supposed to be either sumptuous, or elegant. Seated on the ground with a mat spread before them, a Bramin appointed for the purpose, serves out a portion of food to each individual, the cakes of flour which they eat during the meal serving them in the room of dishes and plates. *

The Seiks are remarkably fond of the flesh of the jungle Hog, which they kill in chance, this food is allowable by their law. They likewise eat of mutton and fish, but these being deemed unlawful, the Bramins will not partake, leaving those who chuse to transgress their institutes to answer for themselves. In the city or in the field the Seiks never smoke tobacco ; they are not however averse to drinking spirituous liquors, in which they sometimes indulge to an immoderate excess ; and they likewise freely take opium, *Bang⁵* and other intoxicating drugs. In their convivial parties each man is compelled to drink out of his own vessel.

Accustomed from their earliest infancy to life of hardship and difficulty, the Seiks despise the comforts of a tent ; in lieu of this, each horseman is furnished with two blankets, one for himself, and the other for his horse. These blankets which are placed beneath the saddle, with a gram bag and heel ropes, comprise in time of war, the baggage of a Seik. Their cooking utensils are carried on *tattoos*.⁶ Considering this mode of life, and the extraordinary rapidity of their movements, it cannot be matter of wonder if they perform marches, which to those who are only accustomed to European warfare, must appear almost incredible.

The Seiks among other customs singular in their nature never suffer their hair, or beards, to be cut, consequently, when mounted on horseback, their black flowing locks, and half naked bodies, which are formed in the stoutest and most athletic mould, the glittering of their arms, and the size and speed of their horses, render their appearance imposing and formidable, and, superior to most of the cavalry in Hindoostan.

In the use of their arms, especially the matchlock, and sabre, they are uncommonly expert, some use bows and arrows. In addition to the articles of dress which have been described in recent publications[†] of the times, Mr. Thomas mentions that the arms and

* Does not this circumstance recall our ideas to the situation of AENEAS and his companions, shortly after their landing on the Coast of Italy ? The condition of Aeneas exhibits a specimen of primeval simplicity of manners among the Romans, no less singular than the coincidence of customs existing in Punjab at the present day, appears strikingly interesting.

Consumtishic forte aliis, utvertere morsus
Exiguam in Cererem penuria adegit edeadi,
Et Vielare manu malisq audac bus orbem
Fatilis crusti, patulis nec parcere quadris,
Heus ! etiam mensas consumimus inquit Iulus.

5. No intoxicants are encouraged among the Sikhs. It is unfortunate that most of the Nihangs have taken to the use of *Bhang*.

6. Ponies.

† Consult the *History of the Siahs Aulam*.

wrists of the Seiks are decorated with bangles of gold, silver, brass and iron, according to the circumstances of the wearers, but among the CHIEFS, of the respective tribes the horse furniture, in which they take the greatest pride, (and which with the exception of the inlaying of their fire arms, is their only luxury), is uncommonly splendid, for, tho' a Seik will scruple to expend the most trifling sum on his food, or clothing, he will spare no expence in endeavouring to excel his comrades in the furniture of his horse and in the richness and brightness of his armour, a circumstance, which appears to bear no inconsiderable resemblance to the customs of the ancient Spartans.*

Considerable similarity in their general customs may be traced with those of the Jauts; though these, in some districts, apparently vary, the difference is not material, and their permitting an interchange of marriages with the Jauts of the Dooab and Harrianah amounts almost to a conclusive proof of their affinity of origin.

The Seiks allow foreigners of every description to join their standard, to sit in their company, and to shave their beards, but excepting in the instance of the Jauts, they will not consent to intermarriages, nor will they eat or drink from the hands of an alien, except he be a Bramin, and for this cast they always profess the highest veneration.⁷

If indeed some regulations which are in their nature purely military and which were introduced by their founder NANICK, be excepted, it will be found, that the Seiks are neither more or less than Jauts in their primitive state.

Women amongst them, are held in little estimation, and though ill treated by their husbands, and prohibited from accompanying them in their wars, these unhappy females nevertheless attend to their domestic concerns with a diligence and sedulousness deserving of a better fate !

Instances indeed, have not unfrequently occurred, in which they have actually taken up arms to defend their habitations, from the desultory attacks of the enemy, and throughout the contest, behaved themselves with an intrepidity of spirit, highly praiseworthy.

In the Seik army, the modes of payments are various, but the most common is at the time of harvest, when every soldier receives the amount of his pay in grain and other articles, the produce of the country; to some is given money in small sums, and to others lands are allotted for their maintenance. Three fifths of the horses in the Punjab are the property of the different chieftains, the remainder belong to the peasantry who have become settlers.

A Seik soldier has also his portion of the plunder acquired in the course of a campaign: this is set aside as a reward for his services, and in addition to it, he sometimes increases his gains, by secreting part of the public plunder.

* See Cornelius Nepos, and Pausanias.

7. The Sikhs are forbidden to observe any caste distinctions among themselves. It was only due to the persistence of Hindu influence that at times the caste made its appearance amongst them.

The nature of the Seik government is singular, and probably had its origin in the unsettled state of the tribe when first established in their possessions. Within his own domains each chief is lord paramount. He exerts an exclusive authority over his vassals, even to the power of life and death; and to increase the population of his districts, he proffers a ready and hospitable asylum to fugitives from all parts of India. Hence, in the Seik territories, tho' the government be arbitrary, there exists much less cause for oppression, than in many of the neighbouring states, and, hence likewise, the cultivator of the soil being liable to frequent change of masters, by the numerous revolutions that are perpetually occurring, may be considered as one of the causes of the fluctuation of the national force.*

An open trade with this country from every part of Hindoostan has long since ceased, but petty merchants by applying for passports from the respective chiefs of the Seik territories previous to entering their boundaries, are generally supplied with them and by this means still continue a trifling commercial intercourse.

Their exports to the countries west of the Attock consist of sugar, rice, indigo, wheat, and white cloth. Their imports from those countries are swords, horses, fruit, lead and spices. The exports to Cashmere may be considered nearly the same as into Persia. Their imports from Cashmere are shawls and a variety of cloths, saffron, and fruit.

With the inhabitants of the mountains they exchange cloths, matchlocks, and horses, for iron, and other inferior commodities from the Deccan are imported, sulphur, indigo, salt, lead, iron, Europe-coarse-broad-cloth, and spices; their exports are horses, camels, sugar, rice, white cloth, matchlocks, swords, and bows and arrows.

This trade is not carried on by any particular route, but depends on the character of the chiefs of those districts, through which they pass, the most considerable part of the trade is, however, carried on from Amrut Seer, by way of Machaywara to Puttyala; southward by way of Hansi, Rauge Raj Ghur and Oreecha into the western part of the Rajepoot country by of Kythul, Jeind, and Dadery, and finally by Karnaul towards Delhi and the Ganges.

This nation, so obscure as hardly to be mentioned, even as a tribe, at the beginning of the present century, have within these last 30 years, raised themselves in such reputation, as not only to attract the notice but excite the alarm of their neighbours, on both sides of their government.

They possess the whole of the Punjab, and it is very probable will one day or other, have an eye to a participation of the Viziers provinces; I propose, therefore, to obtain every possible information of their tribe, manners, customs, and spirit of government,

* In the above sketch of the situation and resources of the Seik nation, Mr. Thomas does not include the territories of Zemaun Shah lying east of the Attock, part of which were during the reigns of the Emperors included in the Punjab, and may therefore be considered as belonging to it.

and, should we be able to penetrate into the Punjab, to describe the face of that country and the natural and commercial productions.

The Punjab or country of the Seiks is composed of the province of Lahore and the *chukla* or division called Sirhind. The inhabitants in general are Seiks, though the cultivators of the soil are many of them Jauts.

Force Cavalry	60,000,	Artillery	40,	Pieces.
Infantry	5,000,	Revenue	5,	Crores.

Capital LAHORE, N. W. by N. 300 Miles.

The Hurrianah country is included in the Sirkar of Hissar, it is called in the map the Lesser Baloochistaun. The inhabitants are chiefly Jauts with the exception of a few Rajpoot, and Rungur villages, which last application is given to such of the Rajpoots who have embraced the Mahomedan religion. Does not Rungur imply coloured, or stained, or, of mixed blood ?

Capital HISSAR, W. N. W. 108 miles.

The country called Thanessar, consists of the western parts of Pahnessar, Karnaull, Kythul, Panniput, Sefeedoo, Jeind, Kosohan and Dehatarut. The inhabitants are chiefly Jauts, though some have become Seiks, and a few are Rajpoots, but of a low caste.